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# VYUŽITÍ FUNKČNÍHO PŘÍSTUPU KE ZLEPŠENÍ KOMUNIKATIVNÍCH ZNALOSTÍ V ANGLIČTINĚ

## USING FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS IN ENGLISH

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## **Poděkování**

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Poděkování patří také mé rodině, která mě po celou dobu studia podporovala.

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Michaela Andělová

**Theme**

Using functional approach to improve communicative skills in English

**Annotation**

The Diploma thesis deals with the use of the functional language as a tool to improve fluency and social adequacy of students' oral performance during speaking activities in EFL classes. The thesis suggests suitable activities that enable the students to learn and practice various language functions in real lifelike situations and for the real purposes. The activities chosen for the classroom practice, which were role plays and activities containing an information gap, were designed to be used for students of different ages at an elementary school. The aim of the practical project was to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching the functional language and the learners' abilities to use the language meaningfully in the chosen activities. The evaluation was based on the observation of the students' performances, the results gained from the questionnaires and the tests given to the students.

The students were able to use the provided phrases of language functions in real life situations meaningfully, which consequently led to improvements of adequacy and partially of fluency of their speech.

**Key words**

Discourse, communicative skill, functional language, fluency, interaction

## **Téma**

Využití funkčního přístupu ke zlepšení komunikačních dovedností v angličtině

## **Anotace**

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá funkčním jazykem v hodinách angličtiny jako prostředku ke zlepšení plynulosti a sociální přiměřenosti slovního projevu žáků. Práce navrhuje vhodné aktivity, které žákům umožňují naučit se a procvičit si různé jazykové funkce v reálných životních situacích a pro reálné potřeby. Vybrané aktivity, kterými byly dramatizace a zjišťování chybějících informací, byly navrženy pro procvičování v jednotlivých třídách základní školy podle různých věkových skupin žáků. Cílem praktického projektu bylo ověření efektivnosti výuky zaměřené na jazykové funkce a efektivnosti použitých aktivit. Hodnocení bylo založeno na cíleném pozorování slovního projevu žáků a na výsledcích získaných z dotazníků a testů vypracovaných žáky.

Žáci byli schopni naučené fráze různých jazykových funkcí používat v reálných životních situacích smysluplně, což následně vedlo ke zlepšení sociální přiměřenosti a částečně i plynulosti mluvního projevu žáků.

## **Klíčová slova**

Řeč, komunikační dovednosti, funkční jazyk, plynulost, interakce

**Tema**

Uso de acceso funcional para mejorar habilidades comunicativas en inglés

**Anotación**

Este trabajo diploma trata de la idioma funcional durante las clases de inglés como un medio para mejorar fluidez y conveniencia social de manifestación verbal de los estudiantes. El trabajo propone unas actividades convenientes que a los estudiantes facilitan aprender y practicar unas funciones idiomáticas diferentes en las situaciones de la vida reales y para las necesidades reales. Las actividades elegidas para practicar en la clase, que eran adaptación teatral y actividades conteniendo las informaciones ausentes, fueron propuestas para los estudiantes de edad diferente en las escuelas primarias. El objetivo de este proyecto práctico era verificación de eficiencia de enseñar la lengua oficial y las habilidades de los estudiantes de usar la lengua en las actividades elegidas. Evaluación era establecida en la observación de manifestaciones verbales de los estudiantes y resultados ganados de los cuestionarios y los tests dados a los estudiantes.

Los estudiantes consiguieron usar las frases de las funciones idiomáticas en las situaciones de la vida reales claramente que al final contribuyó a mejoramientos de la conveniencia social y parcialmente también a fluidez de manifestación verbal de los estudiantes.

**Palabras principales**

Discurso, habilidades comunicativas, idioma funcional, fluidez, interacción

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# 1. Introduction

Communication is an integral part of life in the society and therefore, also an integral part of foreign language classes. To be successful in communication, students need to learn the communicative skills and therefore, learning and development of communicative skills should be regularly included in the lessons.

When attending elementary school, I have experienced that in the foreign language classes there was not much time dedicated to practice of communicative skills and interactive speaking. However, when I travelled and stayed abroad, I realised that communicative skills and ability to speak were what I needed the most. What helped me in communication with native speakers was learning to the phrases of everyday life that they frequently used. Later, when I used these phrases myself, my speech was clearly understood. On account of those experiences I have decided to focus in this Diploma Thesis on the development of communicative skills, especially on the oral production of the target language.

The theoretical part states the term “communication” and explains which aspects of communication affects the process of speaking and the quality of a speech. The methodological part focuses on the practical use of functional approach in the classroom. It gives examples of different activities that could be used and it sets the roles of the teacher and students in the communicative learning process.

The purpose of this Diploma Thesis is to prove that learning speaking skills through functional approach makes the process of learning easier and faster than the traditional procedures of learning to speak. The functional approach is characterised by learning to use different everyday phrases and their modifications actively in communication, which is regularly practised through short dramatisation of dialogues or through other kinds of communicative activities. Moreover, the knowledge of phrases will enable the students to perform interactively and their speech will be more fluent than before. This approach will be discussed in detail further and the confirmation of effectiveness of the functional approach will be stated in the practical project.

## **2. Theory**

### **2.1. Communication**

We all live in a society and therefore, in an interaction with other people. From the moment we are born, we start to communicate with the people around us, with our parents, family, friends and all the people we meet in our life. Communication is being defined as “the successful transmission of a message between people” (Malamah-Thomas, 1991, p. 145). At the present time we can communicate with whoever we wish or need no matter where they are. We can make contacts with other people through telephones, e-mails, online chats or face-to-face conversation. Especially conversation is the way we use to arrange most of contacts in everyday life.

Making conversation in real life is an ability that must be learned. To master the skills of speaking takes a very long time even when we are dealing with our mother language. Consequently, it is even more difficult to learn speaking skills in a foreign language. However, learning foreign languages is a necessity in this modern world. The main purpose for learning foreign languages is a need for communication with people from different parts of the world that speak different languages. We need to know foreign languages when we travel abroad or talk to foreigners, when we do business with foreign companies or we work for an international company.

It is being claimed that “it is not possible not to communicate [...] there is no way for us to avoid giving cues or messages to other human beings in the same environment” (Myers and Herndon, 1988, p. 20). The permanency of communicating is caused by the fact that “in communication, even a lack of a response is a response” (ibid.). By the terms ‘cues’ and ‘messages’ are meant ideas, opinions, feelings or pure information that we use for expressing ourselves. What can be deduce from the statement above is that if we are in a contact with other people, we exchange messages all the time. Therefore, we have to communicate not only purposefully but also unconsciously.

It might be thought that we mostly communicate purposefully, which means when we need or want to pass on, gain or share some sort of messages. However, we actually spend much more time communicating unconsciously, which means by sending messages about us without the use of words. It is the time when we are not making an effort to communicate, but we still send messages to people around us in the way we hold our body and keep our face.

The characteristic of communication divides all our communication into two groups. The first and the more obvious is verbal communication, created purposefully, which is typical entirely for people and is facilitated by production of words that are organized into sentences. Created forms of these words were agreed by a society in which they are used and therefore, they are arbitrary. The second is nonverbal communication, created mainly unconsciously, which includes facial expressions, gestures and postures.

The verbal and nonverbal communications are closely related to each other. While speaking, it is important to be aware not only of the effect of the words but also of other signals we send. Nonverbal features of verbal communication must also be considered while we speak. These features, also called paralinguistic elements of speech, are for example speed, pausing, stress, intonation and quality of the voice or pitch. These are the features that make our communication clearer and more understandable to those we communicate with.

From the division above it is clear that we do not learn a language only as a system of words and grammatically correct sentences. Therefore, in order to communicate effectively and sufficiently, students in the foreign language classes have to be taught, besides new vocabulary and grammar, also nonverbal aspects of speaking that are typical for the society whose language they learn.

The basis of communication between or among people is the created interaction which proceeds all the time they occupy the same environment. The most frequent interaction is face-to-face communication, which consists of verbal production accompanied by nonverbal features and signals. All these aspects should be taught when learning to communicate in a foreign language. In the following parts a closer look will be turned to the verbal part of communication.

### **2.1.1. Spoken discourse and speech**

When communicating with other people, we produce words that we subsequently connect together to form sentences or even a longer organized flow of words. A term 'discourse' is used very often for the flow of words. There are two types of discourse, written and spoken. However, the interest will be focused mainly on the spoken discourse.

There are two different conceptions of what is understood to be a spoken discourse. One conception perceives oral production as a spoken discourse from a single word to a long speech. The other conception does not consider a word as a spoken discourse. The smallest

unit that can be perceived as a spoken discourse must be longer than a sentence. In this second conception the terms spoken discourse and speech are interchangeable.

The most frequent kinds of a discourse in the classroom are an extended talk, also called speech, and a conversation. Oral production is classified as extended talk in the situation when one student is asked to produce a piece of a language in the set amount of time. During the extended talk the student ideally speaks fluently with no need to be interrupted by the teacher for the purposes of correcting the language in order to make the speech meaningful and understandable to listeners. In contrast, conversation is carried out in the situation when usually two students are taking turns in speaking about the same theme and ideally they react to each other's words naturally. This means that they should not perform a conversation learned by heart. "The key differences between conversation and extended talk are length of turns and degree of interaction. [...] In conversation, the social interaction is more obvious, as each short turn responds to previous turns and contributes to the development of the talk. But extended talk, if done well, also needs to take account of the listeners and how they will understand the longer talk turns" (Cameron, 2001, p. 52). Being able to react naturally to other speaker's words needs to be practised in the classroom and students need to be provided with the language forms of needed functions. The practice, although performed in the classroom, should be as realistic as possible. The reason is that "we want children to be able to use the foreign language with real people for real purposes" (Cameron, 2001, p. 37). In other words, in the classroom teachers are teaching the students a foreign language to be able to use it outside the classroom in real life. Therefore, it is needed to require from the children to "know how the foreign language works in conversations and longer stretches of talk and text" (ibid.).

To understand how the foreign language works, it is important to give an explanation of the main features of a discourse. The first couple is connected with the comprehensibility of communication and includes the form of a language that is used and the meaning that is presented by the speaker. The other couple is connected with the speaker and includes the accuracy of the use of linguistic forms of the language and the fluency of oral production.

#### **2.1.1.1. Form and meaning**

The form of a language is its linguistic structure, which is controlled by grammar rules and language patterns that are being used. The meaning is an expressed idea such as actions,

information, feelings and things. They are expressed by the speaker's choice of words and their use in sentences and further by their organisation in the discourse.

A word "is often defined by its relationship to other words" (Harmer, 2001, p. 18). Therefore, the various meanings of one word can only be defined according to the context in which the word is used. The understanding of "the meaning in context [...] allows us to say which meaning of the word, in the particular instance, is being used" (ibid.). When extending this statement further, it is possible to deduce that the meaning of a sentence is defined by its relationship to other sentences, in other words, to information expressed earlier or shortly afterwards. This explains why in communication the meaningful order of ideas is more important than the correct order of words forming the sentences.

As one word can have several meanings, similarly, one language form or one language pattern can have different meanings according to the situation and the context it is used in. However, this statement is also true when inversed. One meaning can be expressed by different forms or language patterns. A sentence "She can not ride a bike." can express either disability or prohibition. Showing a disagreement can be expressed by "No, you are not right." or "I'm afraid I can't agree with you."

The advantage of this fact is that while communicating "a speaker has a choice not only about what to say, but also how to say it" (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 130). For communicatively competent speakers it is an advantage because they may use a variety of language forms and express themselves exactly how they intend to. They are able to distinguish different situations and to vary their speech. On the other hand, the same fact is a disadvantage when learning a foreign language because students need to learn these skills and it is a long-lasting process. However, it is necessary to learn these skills because when the language forms are used incorrectly, the speech may cause misunderstanding or confusion at the very most. At the worst, the wrong use may cause discouragement to continue in the communication and the speaker can be seen as impertinent and rude.

While learning a language it is important to acquire knowledge of grammar rules and of exceptions and also the ability to create sentences of different language patterns. From the point of view of the English language, there is also an importance to be aware of the existence of collocations and phrasal verbs and of the rules governing their use.

Students should gradually gain the knowledge and also practice the use of to maintain their language skills. What is created during oral grammar practice activities is only a concern

for language forms. “The concern for the form is achieved by encouraging students to produce language unthinkingly in accordance with stimuli provided by teacher. There is no real communicative language use. The production stage of the lesson is a further exercise in producing language expected by the teacher rather than using language for communication” (Willis and Willis, 1996, p. 44). Therefore, the process of language learning, from the point of view of communication, has to go further. The process always starts with the recognition of a language pattern and creation of other examples of the pattern, but then it should progress to the correct use of the pattern in communicative activities and finally, to the active use of the pattern in a speech.

So if we want to communicate with other people and express ourselves explicitly and intelligibly, having mere knowledge of a form is not enough. This statement can be supported by the claim that “we need to distinguish between knowing various grammatical rules and being able to use the rules affectively and appropriately when communicating” (Nunan, 1991, p. 12). Another supportive claim is that “learning to use language forms appropriately is an important part of communicative competence” (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 130). The reason is that in communication we have to present our ideas in the way that the receiver will understand the message we have sent, which means meaningfully.

Getting the meaning across is an ability to express our own ideas or information and it is the main aspect of communication. The other aspects such as grammatical correctness and a quality of interaction just make communication clearer. The crucial importance of meaningfulness can be supported by the two following examples. When meaning is missing, communication cannot be successfully made although the sentences are grammatically correct because the communicators do not understand each other. In such a situation the communication collapses. The opposite example is a situation when communicators produce grammatically incorrect sentences, but still the meaning can be grasped. In such a situation the communication can be slowed down but it can continue and progress further.

The form of a language and the expressed meaning are closely related to each other. A communication can be developing when it lacks grammatical correctness, but not when its meaning is missing. The meaning is crucial for communication because it enables the participants to understand the messages that are being sent through each other’s words. The form and the meaning are only two out of four basic aspects of an oral discourse; the other two are fluency and accuracy.

### **2.1.1.2. Accuracy and fluency**

Accuracy of the spoken production is focused on the language itself and “involves the correct use of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation” (Gower, 1995, p. 99). Therefore, students, in order to be accurate, have to know the grammar rules and be able to form sentences according to these rules. From the point of view of a speaker, accuracy “concerns how well language is produced in relation to the rule system of the targeted language” whereas fluency “concerns the learner’s capacity to produce language in a real time without undue pausing or hesitation” (Willis, 1996, p. 22). When students are to be fluent, they have to know how to connect ideas and have to react to changes that happen at the time of their conversation. Fluency is being defined as “the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously” (Gower, 1995, p. 100). But it is also important to say that fluency of speech is meant to be not only the ability of a single person to keep speaking fluently for a certain amount of time, but also to keep a fluent conversation with other people without a long pausing and illogic responses.

Our speech follows our thoughts and therefore, when the speech is broken by interruption it is hard to continue. This effect is even more significant in a discourse of EFL students. When students’ speech is stopped too often, students accept an opinion that their speaking skills are too low for them to participate successfully in the set task and they lose motivation for another attempt (Gower, 1995, p. 101-102). When students are certain that they have a set amount of time without interruption, they usually concentrate on their thoughts and ideas more easily and therefore, their practice of connected speech is more effective.

When an activity in the lesson is focused on practicing fluency, it does not mean that the fluency can be gained only at the expense of the lack of accuracy. All depends on the aims of the learning procedure that the teacher chooses for the communicative activity. “In spontaneous communication learners have little time to reflect on the language they produce” (Willis and Willis, 1996, p. 50). However, if the learners “are given time to prepare what they have to produce then there will be a concern for formal accuracy within a communicative context” (ibid.). Therefore, the key factor that enables accuracy in a fluency practise exercise is time for preparation. However, giving a time for a preparation can only be a step in a learning process when we are aiming for a fluent speech with reduced appearance of mistakes because in real life there usually is no time for preparation of most of the conversations that people make.

The aim of a fluency practice is that “students should be able to get the message across with whatever resources and abilities they have, regardless of grammatical and other mistakes” (Gower, 1995, p. 100). Mistakes are inevitable part of learning process, but student’s aim should be to limit or to avoid undue mistakes that are too basic for the level of student’s knowledge in the target language. It is important to concentrate on the mistakes that affect the meaningfulness of communication or on the incorrect use of functions in communication.

Sometimes it is even being said that “a foreign language learner has to make a lot of mistakes before even managing to produce anything approaching good English” [2]. Making mistakes is a natural way students learn. In the classroom teachers should be able to turn mistakes into benefits by providing feedback and correction, which enables students to improve in the target language. When students know their mistakes, they can realise their weaknesses that needs to be overcome. It is important to help students to set realistic aims that they can reach because the real chance of being successful can make them willing to learn further and consequently, the learning can lead to students’ improvement.

To sum up, the accuracy of speech is shown by the correct use of language forms and the fluency is shown by the ability to connect ideas together without interrupting the flow of speech. A speech of language learners will always contain some kinds of mistakes. When focusing on accuracy of oral production, the attention should aim to every mistake that occurs, but when focusing on fluency of speech, the attention should aim to mistakes that affect the meaning that is to be transmitted.

#### **2.1.1.3. Language function**

When people are speaking and expressing themselves, they have a purpose to do so. All these purposes for which we communicate are called language functions as is stated in the following definition that “language functions are the purposes for which people speak and write” (Blundel, 1982, p. v).

Language functions typical for young children are mostly requesting and expressing likes and dislikes. Older children are explained and taught by their parents and nursemaids in kindergartens how to ask for permission, to thank, to greet different people and to apologise. The typical question asked by children at the preschool age is “Why?” by which they ask for explanation. Very frequent functions used by teenagers are complaining, threatening,



refusing, negotiating and also reassuring. Adults use all possible language functions with all the different varieties of formality and informality according to the situations they occur in and the role they play. How well people are able to use the functions and their formal varieties depends on their communicative abilities learned through all their life experiences.

In the classroom students need to be taught how to express different kinds of language functions. Students are usually able to show their opinions and support them in their mother language. They will be able to do so clearly in a foreign language too when teachers provide students with needed phrases that help them to express intended messages and show them how to use the phrases for the targeted function. These common expressions help students connect individual ideas and create corresponding reaction. It is being advised to “give the students all the tools and language they need to be able to complete the task” [1]. When students “don't have the tools to express themselves in English, they'll use the tools they do have - their native language” [2]. And this is the opposite of what we as a teacher want to achieve in EFL classes. Teachers can avoid that situation if they choose an appropriate speaking activity.

The speaking activities should focus on the correct use of language functions and on the fluency of students' performance. The activities should also follow the rules of natural process children and teenagers learn the mother language. Since there is not that much time in the classroom as it is for the children when learning their mother language in their families, the process has to be condensed and has to progress from controlled activities to the freer activities, which will gradually build up their ability to communicate in the foreign language in more complicated structures and with bigger amount of different varieties of functions. The possibility to use more variations of language functions will enable students to express themselves more clearly and be more meaningfully adequate.

## **2.2. Communicative competence**

In the previous chapters a discourse was described and its characteristics were given. Students need the knowledge of the language for making a speech or a conversation. It is being pointed out that “since communication is a process, it is insufficient for students to simply have knowledge of target language forms, meanings, and functions. Students must be able to apply this knowledge in negotiating meaning” (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 123). The ability to apply the knowledge about a language is called communicative competence.

The term ‘communicative competence’ includes in itself communicative skills and communicative abilities. The first term “skill” is connected with the capacity to perform and the second term “ability” is connected with the capacity to behave in a situation. But some linguists use these three terms interchangeably. In general, it is a capacity not only to produce discourse but also understand what is being said and to be able to respond to other speakers’ discourse.

Many different conceptions exist in the classification of communicative competence. For the purposes of this Diploma Theses Canale and Swain’s categorization was chosen as an example. Their categorization consists of four different components of communicative competence: grammatical and sociolinguistic competences, which focus on the use of language, and discourse and strategic competences, which focus on functional aspects of communication. Grammatical competence is very closely connected to accuracy of a discourse and based on the learner’s knowledge of different lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, phonology and semantics. The competence includes a correct use and a formation of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling and word order. Discourse competence is an ability to connect ideas and to communicate meaningfully while producing more than one sentence. The produced discourse of the speaker should be cohesive and coherent. It means that the forms of language are linked together and thoughts that the speaker is presenting are connected logically and meaningfully while one thought smoothly develops into another. The smooth flow of ideas is enabled by the correct use of pronouns, conjunctions, transitional phrases and logic references. Sociolinguistic competence is the ability to communicate appropriately in different social situations. The speaker is required to have knowledge of language functions and to be able to manipulate with the content of transmitted message. Therefore, the interaction between or among the people needs to be dynamic and spontaneous. Strategic competence is the ability to overcome problems and misunderstandings in the process of communicating caused by the insufficiency of speaker’s language knowledge. Verbal and nonverbal strategies are used to compensate the limitations. The strategies include the usage of gestures, miming and the ability to give definition or description of the actions and objects that the speaker is not able to name directly in order to convey their meaning.

This was a short overall characterisation of the communicative competence from the Canale and Swains’ point of view. Also other partial skills can be included in the characteristics of communicative competence, for example, “being able to figure out the

speaker's or writer's intentions is part of being communicatively competent" (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 128). Understanding of speaker's intentions is a basic condition for successful communication and it saves a lot of time that would need to be spent by additional explanations when trying to make the listener realise what is the sense of what is being said.

When trying to identify what is the speaker's intention, it is important to be able to figure out the main ideas and the crucial facts. Otherwise, concentration on too many details would slow down the spontaneous flow of a discourse, especially of conversation, or could even cause its breakdown. Therefore, "the ability to extract the relevant salient 'facts' from a mass detail" (Brown and Yule, 1989, p. 39) is a necessary component of normal social life.

In real life children learn all these skills by observing the development of communication of other people and by imitation of their actions and reactions for our own purposes. What helps to this learning process is feedback and evaluation that is obtained from the others in their responses to the performance. When learning discourse skills at the early age, "children need both to participate in discourse and to build up knowledge and skills for participation" (Cameron, 2001, p. 57). This is a reason why parents expose their children to as much speaking as possible. Later parents are involving their children in all possible conversations and discussions while they help them to express themselves meaningfully by correcting the children's speech and by offering suitable language forms and the needed vocabulary.

Direct focusing on learning those skills at school is an important way to develop and improve the communicative competence. The principles of learning the foreign language should follow the principles of learning the mother language since students learn to be communicatively competent for the purposes of real life and not only for the classroom purposes. When students are really to communicate with speakers of a foreign language, "they need to know the culturally acceptable ways of interacting orally with others" and "appropriate levels of language for different situations and different relationships" and also know "how to negotiate meaning in various circumstances, and when and how to use appropriate gestures and body language; the message content of pitch, loudness, and intonation patterns, the questions and comments that were acceptable and unacceptable in the culture" (Rivers, 1983, p. 15). A closer look will be turned to the cultural aspect of communication in one of the following chapters.

To sum up, a communicative competence is being understood as an overall speaking skill which is demonstrated by an ability to interact with other people in different social and

cultural context while sending messages to other people by nonverbal gestures and a verbal speech. To send understandable message all the above mentioned aspects of communicative competence must support the same meaning and the same function of the speech performance.

### **2.2.1. Interactional aspect of communication**

As it was said before, communication can never be carried out by a single person on its own but always between or among people that are in an interaction. The interaction is represented by the participants, speakers and listeners, who usually exchange their roles regularly in the process of communicating. They are responding to each other actions while transmitting a message, which is the content of their interaction.

Communicative interaction is an “interaction in terms of who is to say what, to whom, when, and about what” (Nunan, 1991, p. 46). Therefore, not only the speaker and the listener but also the message that is being sent and received is important in the communicative interaction. The interaction is affected by the quality of transmission, which in other words means whether the message is understood by both the participants of interaction in the same way.

To understand each other is also enabled when “the listener gives the speaker feedback as to whether or not he understands what the speaker has said” (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 123). The listener uses different language functions or nonverbal gestures to give the feedback. The feedback is being performed, for example, by nodding to show agreements, by nodding to show disagreements, by shrugging to show hesitation to make own opinions or by using different expressions to make the speaker continue in speaking or repeat or confirm what has been said.

During interactional conversation “we assume a lot of shared knowledge and tend to be relatively inexplicit” (Brown and Yule, 1989, p. 39). It is due to the fact that the people in this interaction are communicating at the same time, on the same place, in the same environment surrounded by the same things. They also usually have a very high knowledge about the other person’s life and close relationship. Therefore, they can easily understand what the other person is referring to in his or her speech. The communicators can omit details about the facts or events they talk about because the meaning of words is obvious to both or

all of them although not articulated aloud. Even strangers have a shared knowledge, at least about the time and the place in which the conversation is performed.

“In normal live, we generally do not ask questions which have patently obvious answers. By the same token, we do not normally tell people what they quite obviously know already. We are usually motivated to tell people things we assume they do not know” (Brown and Yule, 1989, p. 111). Therefore, in the case that both participants of a conversation know details about the objects or actions which is being talked about, there is no need for deeper descriptions and explanations. What protects the conversation from collapsing and enables communicators to move further in the conversation is the listener’s curiousness and their need and willingness to gain knowledge or to get information the listener does not have.

When speaking about the interactions in the classroom, two kinds of interaction can be distinguished from the point of view of the content of communication. One type is a classroom interaction and the other is a classroom transaction. The classroom transaction results from the assumption that communication in the classroom has a pedagogic purpose. Therefore, the transaction is the communication about linguistic items, grammar, culture and language skills while the teacher is in control. On the contrary, the classroom interaction results from personal purposes and ideally enables equal distribution of control and activity of teacher and students. The classroom interaction is the aspect of communication for creating relationships not only between teacher and students but also among students and for organising all the actions that happen in a classroom. The classroom is considered to be a kind of a community (Malamah-Thomas, 1991, p. 15).

It is being claimed that “people communicate most easily with those they have most in common with” (Malamah-Thomas, 1991, p. 13). The implication for the classroom interaction is the fact that it is easier for the students of the same interests to communicate together. However, this cannot be the parameter for grouping students for communicative activities. Grouping according to similar interests can be the starting point and the situation when the students are getting confident in speaking, when they are overcoming uneasiness to make new contacts and when they are starting to make communicative interactions with schoolmates in a foreign language. It is the teacher’s next step to create such conditions in which students will be able to share information about their interests with all the schoolmates in the classroom and learn more about each other. In the preparation for communicative activities the teacher has to apply all the knowledge he or she has about the students and provide them with ideas that students can use in an interaction with schoolmates whom they have less in common with.

Other positive aspects of communicative interaction in the classroom are that “communicative interaction encourages cooperative relationships among students” and “gives students an opportunity to work on negotiating meaning” (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 130). Therefore, an interactive communication enabled during speaking activities makes it possible for students to learn needed skills for the future life such as cooperating as well as presenting and defending their own opinions, which are crucial abilities for successful communication.

These goals are worth the effort and invested time of the teacher when making preparation for the activities if they are reached. However, communication in the classroom can be strongly affected when students are too shy to speak or stressed by the situation that they could be laughed at when making mistakes, being lost for words or not being able to express their ideas and thoughts. Such feelings may completely destroy process of interacting among students. To encourage the interaction it is being advised to teachers to “aim to create a comfortable atmosphere where students are not afraid to speak” (Gower, 1995, p. 102). In case students are afraid to speak, they are not able to respond to each other or to teacher’s responses and therefore, to keep an effective interaction.

Examples of such an atmosphere can be, for example, tolerating the made mistakes, getting students to know each other, teaching them to be tolerant and to accept different opinions of schoolmates and praising for any attempt to speak in a foreign language that students make, especially the voluntary one. The comfortable atmosphere needs to be established by the teacher and the rules set to support the atmosphere have to be agreed by all students. Besides creating the atmosphere and setting the rules, the teacher should enable students to learn interactive skills in order to support communication in the classroom. In the ideal situation “the student should be able to ‘express himself’ in the target language, to cope with basic interactive skills like exchanging greetings and thanks and apologies, and to express his ‘needs’ - request information, services etc.” (Brown, 1989, p. 27). The above mentioned listing of interactive skills is actually a listing of language functions. Therefore, an ability to use language functions is actually shown by a natural interaction of participants in the communication.

To sum up, an interaction is affected by the role of participants, by the context in which the conversation takes place and by the message that is being transmitted. To support the interaction effectively there must be a need for an information exchange that makes both participants willing to communicate. A certain amount of shared knowledge is always present

in every conversation. The higher the shared knowledge, the less details need to be mentioned and the easier it is for participants to communicate interactively and continually.

### **2.2.2. Social and cultural aspect of communication**

Communication of people is determined by their relationships made within a society they live in or they move to. All people of a society are in an interaction with the others in order to share information or to participate. The characteristics of a social interaction can be described as “the human desire to make contact with other people, to cross the gap between their thoughts and one’s own” (Cameron, 2001, p. 38).

In real life we always communicate in a certain social and cultural context. As the context varies, in the same way also the language and style of speech vary. An example of social context is communicating with a boss when we use formal language to speak. The topic usually is only related to our work and we tend to be quite reserved. When arguing with the boss, we express ourselves in an assertive way. On the contrary, when we communicate with friends, we use informal language. The topics might be anything related to our life and we usually tend to be emotional, opened and personal. When arguing with friends, the exchanging of arguments might be fiery but still end up peacefully due to the deep understanding of each other’s characteristics and temperaments.

Cultural context means that people communicate with the other people from different foreign countries when. For successful communication it is important to be informed about the cultural differences in everyday life situations, especially about habits, customs and manners. A very basic example is greeting. In the Czech Republic the general greetings when translated are “good day” or “good evening”. “Hello” is used when meeting friends, relatives and people close to us. Whereas, in Britain the general greeting is “good morning”, “good afternoon” or “good evening”. “Hello” is used frequently when meeting people we know and also strangers except the situation that are very formal or we want to be more polite. Therefore, it is very important to teach students not only the language form and functions but also show them what is socially adequate in various situations that they may occur in. To be socially adequate means to respond according to moral rules and etiquette.

All the time students must be aware of the differences and the teacher should teach the students to tolerate them. Such cultural awareness and cultural understanding are very important for a successful communication not only with foreigners but also with people of the

same society, especially those that belong to minorities as, for example, mentally ill and physically handicapped people or just dyslectic schoolmates. Cultural awareness and a need for cultural understanding are closely connected to social communicative competence.

To be able to successfully perform in a socially correct communication, it is important to learn to use social skills effectively. “Social skills are taken to be all those skills which facilitate effective relationship within groups. They certainly involve the flexibility necessary to adapt to changes in role arising from changes in the composition and activities of groups. They also include the important ability to cope with the reaction of one’s own ideas” (Weiss, 1981, p. 11). Making statements, reacting and responding should proceed smoothly from one to another and it is necessary for the communicators to be flexible and to react appropriately.

“The learner must become aware of the social meaning of language forms” but “for many learners, this may not entail the ability to vary their own speech to suit different social circumstances, but rather the ability to use generally acceptable forms and avoid potentially offensive ones” (Nunan, 1991, p. 13). The teacher has to realize what differences of discourse are students in the class able to distinguish and which language forms students could learn to use. What the teacher can expect depends on the age of students, their level of the targeted language and their social skills in the society that speaks either their first language or the foreign one. Social knowledge in the first language “will also help understand the foreign language as a mean of communication, as words and phrases are learnt to fit familiar contexts, such as greeting and naming” (Cameron, 2001, p. 39). Therefore, the differences can and need to be taught from the very first lessons.

Communication is always performed in a society of a certain culture. When learning a foreign language, it is crucial to have knowledge of the customs and manners that are different to those that students are used to in their own society. Students also need to be able to react in different social situations but always acceptably, according to moral rules.

### **2.3. Functional language**

This last section of the theory contains a list of randomly chosen functions, their brief characteristics and two or three examples that vary in the level of required language knowledge or its formality. The purpose is to give examples to preceding ideas and statements.



The chart of examples was made with the aid of Blundell's division of functions (1982). The second source used was a whole collection of textbooks used in the primary schools I taught at. It was "Chit chat" (Shipton, 2003) for young pupils and "Project" (Hutchinson, 2000) for the older ones.

Function	Characteristic	Phrases
greeting people	phrases used when meeting or contacting someone	Hello. Bye-bye. Nice to see you again.
thanking	showing our appreciation	Thank you. I deeply appreciate what you have done for me.
giving personal information	informing about one's name, age, address, marital status ...	My name is Amy Brown. My maiden name was Amy Longfield. When were you born?
giving direction	asking for the way or explaining the way	Turn left here. Where is the nearest post office?
apologising	requesting for forgiveness for previous actions that we regret having done	I am sorry. I really apologise for what I have done to you.
agreeing and disagreeing	showing similarity or differences in opinions	It is wrong/true. I don't think anyone would disagree with you.
narrating	telling about actions, their order, consequences and causes	He went home because he was tired. He quickly returned to his flat as he had started to feel very tired.
describing	providing main characteristics and features of something	He is kind. He easily gets on with anybody thanks to his very friendly character.
complaining	showing disagreement with ideas and actions of other people	It is no good. It is not worth the money it cost.
reminding	refreshing someone's memory about some action or information	Remember to buy some bread. You won't forget to buy some bread, will you?
giving permission	allow someone to do something	Yes, certainly. I can't see any objection.
persuading	trying to make people do what we suggest them	Let me try it, please. Are you really sure you can't allow me to try?
requesting	asking someone for a favour	Could you stay there, please? Would it be possible for you to stay there?
suggesting	offering an ideas	Let's go home. Have you not considered going home earlier?
etc.	...	...

## **2.4. Conclusion**

People are forced to communicate when living in a society. Therefore, being communicatively competent is a need. This is also the reason why teaching and learning the speaking skills should not be omitted or neglected in foreign language classes. Being communicatively competent in a foreign language requires knowledge of sub-skills and a long-term practise. Knowing the forms and vocabulary of targeted language is not sufficient for producing effective conversation. What is crucial is not only clarity but also fluency of speech and adequate reactions to other participants' actions. The fluency and adequacy in communication can be reached by the students more easily when knowing and being able to use various phrases expressing different functions.

### **3. Methodology**

It is important to mention at the beginning of the methodological part that functional approach does not have a prescribed methodical system that could be used in the classroom. The functional approach is a part of communicative approach and differs mainly by its focus. The approach focuses on the ability to express and use a large variety of language functions in the language discourse, which should enable students to express themselves more clearly and to be more meaningfully adequate. These functions are introduced and practised through communicative activities and typical procedures used in this approach are suggested by the principles of communicative approach.

#### **3.1. Communication in the classroom**

##### **3.1.1. Classroom situation**

Students learn a foreign language so that they can communicate with foreign language speakers in real life for the personal or business matters. When students learn a foreign language, they acquire knowledge of the language forms and communicative competences. The knowledge is gained and the competences are developed through different actions which students perform. The quality of students' knowledge and competences depends mainly on the approaches, methods and techniques that are used for the learning and teaching practice. Each individual teacher or school creates their own methodological system that they apply to foreign language classes. Those differences are possible because the only compulsory document for educating students at schools, which is the 'Framework for Educational Program', states only the goals of basic education and key competences that students should develop during the education. Therefore, the procedures in the lessons may vary greatly.

Sometimes it is being claimed that a class is only "an artificial environment for learning and using a foreign language" (Littlewood, 1981, p. 44) and a typical conversational classroom is a "biographical question-and-answer session of where-do-you-live-what-are-your-hobbies variety" (Ur, 1981, p. 5). The first characteristic is describing a classroom in which the aim might be only to learn the language for learning itself and to gain enough marks for final classification at the end of the term. The second is describing a classroom in which communication is used mainly for practising the language forms and vocabulary. The outcomes of these ways of teaching will not be much beneficial for the students in real life

because the social interaction is limited in these lessons and the aim lacks the real purpose of natural communication.

In real life situations students will need to be able to use the language to get across the intended meaning and not only ask and answer questions. A foreign language classroom should become a “real social context in its own right, where learners and teacher enter into equally real social relationship with each other” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 44). The teacher has to only find such activities and tasks that bring the real life into the classroom and support the social interaction in which both learners and teacher are creating and developing relationships among each other. These activities should contain various communicative situations and opportunities to interact.

From what has just been discussed can easily be deduced that it is the teacher who enables or disables communicative atmosphere in the classroom. The teacher sets the roles, duties and amount of involvement of the students in the language practice by the choice of activities and tasks. In the following chapter a closer look will be turned to the teacher’s roles in lessons and activities devoted to communication that aims mainly at language functions.

### **3.1.2. Roles of the teacher**

A teacher is the most important person in the classroom from the point of the organisation of the lesson, but it is the student who is the central object of the learning process. Even when the teacher is controlling the whole lesson, he or she has to be able to adjust his or her own action in order to create conditions in which the student’s learning is as effective as possible. The main aim of the teacher’s work should be to develop the student’s knowledge and skills because the quality of teacher’s work will be evaluated above all by the results the students reach and improvements they make.

In the communicative classroom practice the teacher changes his or her roles according to the students’ needs and the stages of the lesson. From the overall point of view, the teacher is a manager of classroom actions and “one of his major responsibilities is to establish situations likely to promote communication” (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 131). This is mainly achieved by the choice of suitable activities and creation of supportive environment. At the beginning of a communicative activity the teacher is acting as facilitator of students’ learning. He or she “provides material and guidance to enable students to work on their own” and “advises students how best to approach a task” (Prodromou, 1992, p. 38).

Before the students start working in groups or pairs on the given task, “the teacher’s main task is to prepare the students [...] for the activity they must undertake” (Byrne, 1976, p. 80). The teacher has to give the students instructions for the group activity and explain all the details of the expected students’ actions that are crucial for successful completion of the task. The students should know what to do, in other words, what the purpose is.

“While learners are performing, the teacher can monitor their strength and weaknesses” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 19). The teacher walks around the class, listens to students’ oral production and observes the performances so that he or she could provide the students with a feedback when the activity is finished. However, “if learners find themselves unable to cope with the demands of a situation, the teacher can offer advice or provide necessary language items” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 19) during the activity. In the feedback the teacher should refer to good points of students’ performance as well as to mistakes and inconveniences in their speech.

The teacher may also be a participant of the activity when “engaging in the communicative activity along with the students” (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 131). The teacher’s participation in the activity is possible, but it should be done cautiously so that the teacher avoids to dominate in the activity because it is the students turn to be active and in charge of speaking. The teacher usually decides to participate actively in the communicative activities in order to “introduce new information to help the activity along, ensure continuing student engagement, and [...] maintain a creative atmosphere” (Harmer, 2005, p. 276).

The main purpose of what the teacher does during the communication practice is to try to create suitable conditions that would motivate students to speak. The students’ speaking practice and provided feedback can lead to improvement of their communicative competence and quality of their speech.

### **3.1.3. Supportive environment for communication**

Speaking as a productive skill requires full concentration and in comparison to perceptive skills demands active participation. When speaking, it is necessary to understand the exact meaning of words and phrases and also know how to use them. Whereas when listening and reading, the meaning can be guessed or elicited from context and concentration can be only partial, focused only on the parts that interest the receiver. It is easier to perceive some information than trying to deliver them in speech. The reason is the difference in the

range and size of the personal passive vocabulary that is understood and the active vocabulary that can be recalled from our memory and used actively.

The active use of the language is the principle of communicative approach. The question is whether or not the students get enough opportunities to practice speaking or discussing something in the foreign language lessons. The answer for standard schools is no, except the schools that focus their priorities on the foreign language learning. In many cases “only a limited number of students can talk at one time and talking, therefore, is liable to be practised less” (Ur, 1981, p. 3). But the absolute opposite is needed because to build communicative competence and to get fluent in language, oral production requires regular practice.

The ideal classroom practice that would be maximally beneficial to the students is “the one in which as many students as possible say as much as possible” (Ur, 1981, p. 3). To create such a situation in which students can speak simultaneously, actively and for a longer period of time demands thorough organisation, consistent adherence of set rules and supportive atmosphere.

The classroom atmosphere is one of the factors that affect the students’ performance in communicative activities. “The learner must be stimulated and must not be ashamed to ask questions” (Prodromou, 1992, p. 13). The stimulus for speaking is provided, for example, by a challenging task that students are asked to do, by an interesting topic that provokes student’s thinking and imagination. When the stimulus is effective, it motivates students to participate in communicative activities.

When students resolve to join the activity, their attempts and contributions should be appreciated by the teacher. The correct and relevant contribution to discussion should be praised in order to encourage the students in further participation in the actual or any other communicative activity that will be carried out in the future. The encouragement is important because “it is much more difficult for learners to express themselves freely than it is to extract right answers in a controlled exercise” (Ur, 1981, p. 2). The production of a language is more demanding because the student’s speech is the result of complicated sequences of different sorts of thinking. When producing a speech of any kind, at first the student has to analyse the speech of the other participant whose statement they want to respond to. Then the student has to decide what to say and finally, to choose the form and the style that suits the played role and the situation he or she is in.

In real life students are willing to communicate, especially with friends. They are able to spend hours chatting, discussing different topics and notifying their own opinions. All students are making their own opinions about the people they meet, things they see and actions that happen to them every day. The process of students' perception and evaluation is conscious as well as unconscious and occurs all the time when students perceive something. It means that the students should have always something to say. Therefore, the only task for the teacher during the classroom practice is to find the right way to make students willing to share the opinion and their experiences with the rest of the class, which means that the teacher needs to give students a reason to talk. In other words, it means that the choice of an interesting topic does not insure success of communicative activity but the right choice of task can. The characteristics of different tasks and the criteria for their right choice will be described closely in the chapter 'Stage of preparation'.

If the above mentioned principles are not accomplished, most of the students will not be willing to participate actively in communicating and the whole activity could lose its sense because its key aim would not be fulfilled. The amount of production of the student's contributions would be low and sporadic. Another reason for low participation can be that students may have problems with expressing themselves clearly. They need to be taught how to manage the situation so that the communication does not collapse.

#### **3.1.4. Communicative strategies for overcoming difficulties**

Learners of a foreign language will hardly ever maintain language knowledge and communicative competence of native speakers. The maintenance is difficult for the learner who studies the foreign language in the country where the language is spoken and even harder the situation is for the learners who are not exposed to the language outside the classroom. The lastly described situation is the common one for the students at elementary schools in the Czech Republic. For these students the language lessons at school are usually the only time they are exposed to the language. The average amount of the lessons differs from hundred and twenty to hundred and sixty lessons per year while every lesson is lasting for forty-five minutes, which is not sufficient.

To compensate these time limitations the teacher should maximize the effectiveness of learning as much as possible. The teacher should teach students to use different communicative strategies in order to show them that even with limited knowledge they are

able to express themselves. For example, when students have a problem to express what they intended to say, they “must try to find an alternative way of getting the meaning across” (Littlewood, 1984, p. 83). The ways of overcoming the difficulties are called communicative strategies. They need to be taught by the teacher and practised by the students. When students have experiences with using different communicative strategies, they can be able to manage the situation much easily than those who has never tried it. Therefore, it is the teacher’s commitment to enable students to practice these strategies.

In real life situations as well as the classroom situations the ability to use different communicative strategies will enable “the learner with limited knowledge of a language [...] enter into conversation with more fluent speakers and exploit the resources at his or her disposal in order to cope” (Prodromou, 1992, p. 13). When students realise they are able to take part in communication performed in the foreign language, they will gain confident and more of them may become willing to participate more often or even regularly without being forced to.

If the learners aren’t able to express themselves, they should be taught strategies to help them to cope. The following examples of the strategies are taken from Littlewood’s division (1984). The first strategy to mention is the one that students know very well but should not be used. The principle is to “avoid participating actively in discussions” (Littlewood, 1984, p. 84). The possible reason for the uncooperative behaviour can be a lack of confidence, necessary vocabulary or interest in the activity. The true reason should be discovered by the teacher and than changes should be arranged. For example, an activity or task could be transformed and needed vocabulary could be supplied. The second strategy, which students are usually familiar with, is to adjust the message they intended to transmit. Students’ adjustment is made “by simply abandoning their message half-way through” (ibid.) and by changing its content or form to suit the vocabulary they know or the language structure they are able to use. The third strategy is paraphrasing, which is used by students who “did not recall the word” (ibid.). The meaning of such word is conveyed, for example, by giving a description of the word or by providing its synonyms and antonyms. It is a very useful strategy and also typical in natural discourse. The last strategy to be mentioned is approximation which means “using words which are less specific than the intended meaning” (Littlewood, 1984, p. 85). Less specific word for ‘strawberries’ would, for example, be ‘some fruit’. There are several other communicative strategies that could be used by students to overcome difficulties in expressing themselves, but the above described are the most common



in the classrooms. When the strategies, except the very first one, are used, the performance seems more natural and the speech is developing more smoothly and fluently.

### **3.1.5. Purposeful communication in the classroom**

Based on the theory of functional approach, it has already been mentioned that “when we communicate, we use the language to accomplish some function, such as arguing, persuading, or promising. Moreover, we carry out these functions within a social context. A speaker will choose a particular way to express his argument not only based upon his intent and his level of emotion, but also on whom he is addressing and what his relationship with that person is” (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 123). Also the connections between function and social context can be expressed by the level of formality according to the type of communicators. When the functional approach is applied in the classroom, these effects of communication need to be understood by the students too.

When learning within a certain context and trying to understand language functions, it is much easier to learn the language and to communicate naturally. The suitable way to learn a foreign language is when “the grammar and vocabulary that the students learn follow from the function, situational context, and the roles of the interlocutors” (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 130). Actually, this is a natural way people develop their language skills and enlarge their actively used vocabulary. An example of such a process is a situation when participants of communication are speaking to each other while using all the already gained knowledge, mastered skills and experiences. This knowledge and those skills are not identical, on the contrary, they vary and such a variation enables learners to learn something from the others.

When students learn new vocabulary and grammar isolated from the context, it is much more complicated for them to use new vocabulary and grammar structures not only in communication but also just while making sentences. It is advisable to teach new vocabulary and language forms in context because “mastery of vocabulary and structures results in nothing if the learner cannot use those forms for the purpose of transmitting and receiving thoughts, ideas, and feelings between speaker and hearer or writer and reader” (Brown, 1987, p. 202).

Besides the successful use of forms, there are several other aspects creating relevant and therefore, functionally correct communication. “A learner might acquire correct word order, syntax, and lexical items but not understand how to achieve a desired and intended

function through careful selection of words, structure, intonation, nonverbal signals, and astute perception of the context of a particular stretch of discourse” (Brown, 1987, p. 204). When teachers require functionally correct speech from students they have to be aware of the fact that students have to build their communicative skills gradually and in a logic order so that they will be using the language functions naturally. A learning process of a foreign language needs to contain all the mentioned aspects and students should adopt similar behavioural patterns and patterns of speech that native speakers have as much as possible

Another condition for realistic communication refers to the audience. “If you wish linguistic production to be functional and to accomplish its intended purpose, you must of course have the attention of the hearer or the audience” (Brown, 1987, p. 206). Otherwise, communicating without any response or reaction from the listener would make the communication meaningless. Delivering a message is only the first half of successful communication and the one that is not fundamental. Only when the meaning is got across, the communication can be functional and its purpose can be reached.

Communication with other people needs to be purposeful. If we did not have a purpose to speak, we would not be motivated and therefore, we would not communicate. The question is whether or not speaking activities in the classroom are purposeful. In case of a two or five-minute speech in front of the class the purpose of such exercises might seem very limited, especially to the students. Most of them may assume that the purpose of such a speech is accomplishing a task given by teacher, gaining a mark or presenting their memorized knowledge from the last lesson. They do not consider such an exercise as their opportunity to practise keeping fluent speech, to master their overall skills in presenting themselves in front of the audience or even as a preparation for interviews or presentations that they will possibly undertake in their professional life in the future.

When the students do not realise the aim for which the teacher carries out such an exercise, the teacher has to include this exercise in the realistic context that will show the student that such an exercise is useful to them. The context has to be as similar to real life situations as possible. Activities presenting a real life situation should remind students that the same may happen to them in their real life outside the classroom and teach them how to successfully accomplish set tasks and how to cope with the situation. A teacher may give a task to audience while listening so that the speaker feels and knows that he or she is being listened to not only by the teacher but also by other schoolmates. In such a situation the

speaker is in an educative position or a position of a person who is watched and his speech is followed by the audience all the time as through an interview or while making a presentation.

The students realising the correct way of using forms of a language in the suitable situations and contexts are able to perform in a meaningful communication. When communicators want to be socially adequate and when they want their communication to be meaningful and understandable, they follow generally known rules and these roles should be followed in the foreign language classes too. No abstract or artificially created activities in the lessons can substitute an experience of a real life situation. To make the classroom activities meaningful they should contain real life situations and also tasks containing real communicative purpose. Moreover, when the activities seem real, they can be motivating for the students and beneficial for the students' future.

### **3.2. Stage of preparation**

Before the teacher enters the classroom, he or she has to have the lesson planned and also be prepared to adjust his or her plan and even to improvise. What the teacher has to do in advance is to decide what he wants the students to practice. In other words, what the aim is and what the objectives are. The decision should be made in consideration to the student's age, already acquired competences and gained knowledge of the language. Then the teacher has to plan the phases of the lesson, grouping arrangements and activities that the students will be asked to do. When the activities are decided, the materials to be used in the lesson need to be chosen or prepared. Sometimes the procedure may be different. For example, the teacher may find an interesting material that he or she would like to use in his or her lesson and thus prepare an activity that is constructed on the basis of the material. Finally, the teacher has to consider how the feedback will be organised and how the students' performance will be evaluated and assessed.

#### **3.2.1. Choice of functions and situations for communicative activities**

All divisions of functions, which are possible to find out in different publications, are artificially created and ordered according to the author's needs, intention and aim. "The study of functions and how they are realised in language has had a profound effect upon the design of language-teaching materials, making language purpose a major factor in the choice of syllabus items and teaching techniques" (Harmer, 2001, p. 24). As a result of a variety of

classifications, the teacher has to choose such learning materials for the students that will be suitable and relevant. The teacher should identify which social environments the students are mostly part of and then the teacher should choose such phrases of different functions and new vocabulary that match the students' needs.

Generally speaking, students mostly communicate with their family, friends, teachers or strangers at home, school and in clubs or shops in cities or villages. In these environments students may find themselves in different situations and play different roles. It would be a great advantage for the students if they knew how to possibly react and how to present their own ideas, opinions, feelings and knowledge. Therefore, the teacher should choose phrases of the functions that the students will need to fulfil the communicative desires and personal needs.

No learner of a foreign language will be able to speak naturally from the beginning of the learning process. The learner has to learn to "distinguish between the forms he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence, and the communicative functions which they perform. In other words, items mastered as part of a linguistic system must also be understood as part of a communicative system" (Nunan, 1991, p. 13). In practice it means that students should be able to decide which language form to use in which situation according to the meaning they want to express and the purpose they use it for, in other words, the function. The verb "can" can be used as an example. It expresses an ability in the sentence "She can swim.", a permission in "She cannot go out tonight.", a request in "Can you shut the door, please?", an admonition in "Cannot you say hello?" or a possibility in "It cannot be Peter because he is abroad at the moment.". It is also important to realise that "one function can have many different linguistic forms" (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 128). In other words, several phrases of similar meaning could be used for the same function.

Due to the existence of such varieties, the teacher has to choose the suitable phrase or phrases according to the students' age and level of their language knowledge and skills. Students have to be explained the differences between the uses of the linguistic forms of one function if there are any. Students have to build the knowledge of language functions gradually and in a logic order so that they will be using the language functions naturally. All that should be practiced in appropriate contexts, which enable students to acknowledge the different functions and get confident enough to use them actively in their own speech. Individual phrases of various functions have to be introduced, used in a context and practised.

It is also important to realise that “structures and functions are not bound to specific situations” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 63). Therefore, the teacher has a possibility to present in the lessons any situation that enables the use of what is just being taught and learned. Another option is to present situations in which the students may occur in real life or even situations in which students will unlikely or never occur, but which will be interesting for the students. The examples of an infrequent situation might be those that provoke students’ fantasy or contain some kind of incidents, mysteries or problems. The situations should also “be capable of stimulating learners to a high degree of communicative involvement” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 63). The involvement is a significant aspect of successfully developing communication.

The teacher’s aim in the lessons should be the creation of such situations in which the “language is used in a variety of ways in terms of subject-matter and communicative function” (Ur, 1981, p. 4). In order to achieve this, the teacher has to prepare adequate activities and set tasks enabling the use of varieties of language functions.

### **3.2.2. Main features of communicative activities and tasks**

As was just mentioned above, it is important to prepare an activity in which students are asked to use various functions. However, this criterion for designing communicative activities is not the only one. Other criteria are connected not only to the activity itself but also to the task, the content, complexity and time management of the activity. The most important ones will be mentioned below.

A task should be as realistic as possible so that the completion would seem purposeful. Also “the simpler the task, the more chance it has of success” (Ur, 1981, p. 14). When a task is complicated, more time needs to be spent by giving instructions and explaining details of the activity. Moreover, there is a bigger chance of failure of the activity caused by false understandings or a loss of student’s motivation and concentration on the activity. On the other hand, “the task must be hard enough to demand an effort on the part of the group members, but easy enough for it to be clear that success is within their grasp” (ibid.). The task cannot be too easy, otherwise the students would get bored and would lose the motivation just as when the task is too complicated.

In order to motivate the students they should be “given the opportunity to express personal feelings, ideas or opinion” (Prodromou, 1992, p. 84). It is important to realise that “student motivation and performance are dependent to a large extent on the interest and

enjoyment generated by the activity” (Ur, 1981, p. 14). What is interesting and enjoyable for the students may vary a lot. Therefore, it is the teacher’s task to discover what the students’ likes, dislikes and hobbies are and to choose or create the activity to suit the students’ interests and learning styles. However, the activity should neither be over-exciting because consequently, students could “raise their voices and disturb other groups” or even “drop for extended periods into their native language” (Ur, 1981, p. 17), which is unwanted during communicative activity.

Another criterion is that communicative activities should “focus on meaning rather than form” and should contain “an element of unpredictability” (Prodromou, 1992, p. 84). When form is the aim, the students usually get cautious about not making mistakes. As a result, their speech is less fluent and the occurrence of hesitation rises. In communicative activities the language should become only a tool enabling communication and interaction among students and not the subject of practice. When meaning is the aim, students may make more mistakes connected to a language form, but their speech is usually more fluent and more natural. Meaning is facilitated by the context which the activity provides and by authenticity of task.

Neither all of these characteristics of a really communicative activity nor all the criterion can be satisfied at once. According to what extend the activities satisfy the criteria, several different types of communicative activities are being distinguished. Littlewood’s division was used below to describe these types.

### **3.2.3. Development of communicative activities**

According to Littlewood’s division (1981 and 1984) there are two main types of communicative activities and they differ by their focus and emphasis on speaking freely. The first type are pre-communicative activities that “help learners to master separate aspects of the language, such as sounds and patterns, through [...] habit-forming techniques” (Littlewood, 1984, p. 92). Typical examples are drills and various repetitions that enable none or only limited personalization of the used language. Drills and repetitions are fully guided by the teacher and these activities focus on forms of a language and the accuracy of their use.

A little bit more advanced variety of pre-communicative activities are question-answer activities, which also practice mainly the correct use of language forms. However, in these activities the teacher can “make the learners perceive the interaction as more communicative

if he responds to the content of what they say as well as to its linguistic form” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 16).

The second type are communicative activities, which are designed to “help learners to integrate their separate sub-skills into effective system for communicating meanings” (Littlewood, 1984, p. 92). The meanings are provided by the need to communicate. Communication is enabled when students are allowed to fully interact and apply their knowledge, experience and opinions.

There are two types of communicative activities. The first type are the functional communicative activities containing “a problem which learner must solve, or information that they must exchange, with whatever language they have at their disposal” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 20). To enable students to succeed in the activity, the students need to use different language functions, such as describing, giving directions, and narrating. The disadvantage of purely functional activities is a lack of communicative functions, such as greeting, apologizing and offering.

The communicative functions are used in the second type of communicative activities which are called social interaction activities. Their main feature is that participants play a certain role within a set context. These activities are more similar to communicative situations in real life “where language is not only a functional instrument, but also a form of social behaviour” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 43). These activities focus on “the social acceptability of language forms” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 20).

Littlewood (1981, p. 38) explains what exactly is changing when the activities are developing from pre-communicative to communicative:

- interaction becomes less controlled
- meaning becomes less predictable
- range of communicative functions rises
- opportunity to express one’s own individuality increases.

After the main features of communicative activities were described and the main types were characterised it is time to provide some examples.

#### **3.2.4. Examples of activities**

In real life it is impossible to divide our communication into a functional communication and a social communication. The reason is that every communication is

carried out for a certain purpose, which requires the use of “pure” language functions, and in a particular social context, which requires the use of communicative language functions.

Therefore, functional communicative activities are artificially created activities on the basis of needs for communication in real life. These activities were most probably designed to make it easier for the students to practice communication. The simplicity was reached by choosing only the task of the communication such as, for example, solving a problem and gaining the missing information. The social part of communication was not taken into account probably in order to make the activity as simple as possible for the learning process.

From the point of view of real life, the disadvantage of purely functional activities is that they only give students reason to communicate, but they do not set the background information and the roles, which are always set in real life.

The only aspect to be changed in purely functional communicative activity to create social interaction activity is setting the roles. For example, when two students have a map and they are asked to find the best way from the post office to the bank, this activity is purely functional communicative activity. In contrast, when we say that the students are two friends trying to find the shortest way from the post office to the bank, this activity is social interaction activity. The only difference in the students’ performance is that students in the second case will greet each other as it would be in real life.

The problem with this artificially made division is that some phrases of a language function or a whole group of language functions is not possible clearly classify as only communicative functions or “pure” language functions. The reason is that these phrases will occur in the social part of communication as well as in the functional part of communication. For example, agreeing, suggesting and complaining. Therefore, for teaching and practising all language functions the teacher needs to use in the lessons not only functional communicative activities but also social interaction activities.

#### **3.2.4.1. Drills**

Drill are not communicative activities but only pre-communicative exercises, in which students are repeating what the teacher is saying word by word or with very limited modifications. Nevertheless, drills are beneficial activities for learning language functions because through the repetition the students are fixing the forms of language and language functions into their memory.



The advantage of drills is that every single student is producing language at the same time and in its correct form, which is useful for acquiring and fixing the language knowledge. However, the teacher should be careful not to overuse drills in the classroom.

#### **3.2.4.2. Question-answer practice**

Question-answer practice is a higher level type of pre-communicative activities because it allows students to be initiative in the creation of answers to questions given either by the teacher or other students. The benefit of these activities for learning functions is the presence of an information gap, which is “encouraging a purposeful use of language in the classroom” (Prodromou, 1992, p. 155). The students learn through these activities to use functions actively and to modify them according to their needs. Although the students are allowed to express their intended meaning, the main concern is still the used form.

The teacher can change question-answer practice into more meaningful activities and consequently show the students the purpose of the use of language forms when this activity will be carried out in the form of a questionnaire or a survey. These forms enable more natural and effective interaction among students because they contain an information gap, which gives the activities a purpose and motivates the students.

#### **3.2.4.3. Role-play**

Role-plays are activities during which the students perform a discourse in the form of a dialogue and adopt a certain role in a set context, which enables the use of language functions in simulated real life situations and consequently, prepare students for the real life use of the language.

The advantage of role-plays is that they are creative and fully interactive. Another benefit of role-plays is that “the kind of speech involved is concrete and personal” and “the issues relevant to actual life” (Ur, 1981, p. 9). Role-plays enable the use of a large variety of different language functions which are needed for completing the wide range of tasks or for performing various actions set by the roles and background information of the situation. However, the teacher should consider which phrases of different functions can be used in dialogues. The aim is to choose the phrases that are realistic for the chosen situations and support the style of spoken discourse.

#### **3.2.4.4. Discussion**

A possible definition of a discussion is that the discussion is an “exchange of ideas and opinions either on a class basis [...] or within the context of the group” (Byrne, 1976, p. 82). From the point of view of the functional approach, the discussion enables students to use a big variety of language functions for their real purposes, when trying to reach a sensible compromise to problems. Students learn to use the functions actively and naturally to negotiate and to support their own ideas and opinions. Such functions are, for example, disagreeing, suggesting or persuading.

A benefit of discussions is that “learners must practice the skills for managing longer sessions of social interaction, such as introducing a new-topic, turn-taking or sustaining the conversation through difficult period” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 47). The same will be required in real life when students will be having a discussion with their parents or when they attend company meetings in their professional lives.

#### **3.2.4.5. Games**

Through games students learn to use the language functions purposefully and naturally even without realising the learning because students’ aim is to win the game or complete its task. However, the range of functions varies according to the type of a game. Therefore, the teacher should choose such a game to be used that is suitable for the students’ age, the level of their language and the aim of the lesson.

When considering the use of communicative activities in the classroom, the teacher should vary the types the activities containing different tasks, procedures, classroom management and should also practise different communicative skills in order to keep students motivated in oral performances. To vary the activities is possible because there is a wide range of modifications to the activities and therefore, the options are nearly unlimited.

#### **3.2.5. Materials**

Some communicative activities are possible to be carried out without the use of any supportive materials whereas other communicative activities are based on the use of materials.

For the practice of language functions a picture can be used as the key object when students are asked to perform a one-minute speech describing the picture. In another situation, students can be given a set of two similar pictures to discover the differences without showing the picture to the partner. A map is a suitable supportive material for giving directions or instructions in order to navigate the partner to an unknown place.

All the mentioned materials to be brought to the classroom need to be chosen or prepared in advance. The materials can become valuable prompts for speaking activities because they are motivating and interesting for the students.

When the teacher has decided what activity will be realized in the lesson, the functional and situational phrases have been chosen and materials prepared, the preparation stage is finished. It is time to bring the activity into the classroom and to let students to perform and complete the prepared tasks.

### **3.3. Stage of performance**

A speaking activity in the classroom needs to be organised in several phases. At first the students need to be motivated and prepared for their speaking performance through some kind of a pre-activity. Just before the speaking activity starts, the teacher has to give instructions about the procedure that will follow and also he or she has to group the students as required. Finally, the students can start completing the tasks and performing.

#### **3.3.1. Setting task and giving instructions**

The first and important step in the stage of performance is the art of giving instructions. The basic criteria for instructions are their simplicity and clearness. The teacher should try to set the task by giving instructions in English because “students can learn from hearing instructions and explanations in English” (Prodromou, 1992, p. 63). They are becoming acquainted with various forms of the language and even with language functions during the time the instructions are being given. Due to the fact that most of the instructions are being repeatedly used in the lessons, the students can easily learn them.

Another step in giving instructions is a demonstration of the procedure that students will be required to perform. The teacher should act unambiguously and accompany the

demonstration with simple verbal instructions. When the demonstration is well performed, even beginners and very young children will know what they are asked to do although they might have not understood the words.

As a final step of giving instructions the teacher can “give students one or more ‘trial runs’ before the game is played in earnest” (Byrne, 1976, p. 100). Asking students to demonstrate the instructions will prove whether or not they understand them. It is not advisable to ask students whether they understood the instruction because students will not be willing to admit that they do not know. The trial run is a useful technique that will prove the real understanding. The instructions need to be clear before students are divided into groups or pairs and start working.

### **3.3.2. Grouping and performing**

When students understood the instructions, the seating arrangement needs to be set. The advantage of a communicative activity when students are working together is that it “maximizes the amount of communicative practise they receive” (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 129). The communicative practice enables a formation of an interaction between or among students and also the development of social relationship.

The first step for the teacher, which needs to be planned in advance, is to decide how students will be divided into the groups, whether by random choice or by the purposeful choice of the teacher according to the aims of the activity. The criteria that the teachers should consider, when choosing the students himself or herself, are the gender issues, students’ preferences of each other or the students’ strength and weaknesses.

When forming the pairs and the groups, “it is always good to vary the focus, to have students working together in different combinations and, at some stage during the course, with every other student” (Seymour and Popova, 2003, p. 6). There might always be students who are not favoured to be worked with or who are not willing to cooperate because they have lower knowledge and skills or they are shy. To work with those students is for the others harder and therefore, it is vital to change the pairs and groups. Otherwise, students working with the more problematic ones would be constantly handicapped and they would not have a chance of equal practice as the rest of the class would have.

The second step is to set the students’ roles in the group or the pair. It is important especially when the students are working in bigger groups in order to avoid the situation when

the strongest student would do the task himself or the weakest one would not contribute at all. To ensure that the students will not argue with each other over the activity, “each group should have its own ‘leader’ [...] to co-ordinate their activities and to serve as a link with the teacher” (Byrne, 1976, p. 81).

The third step is to set the allowed time for preparation. The setting of time gives students detailed idea how the preparation needs to be done and how much time they can spend on each part of the task, in case the preparation has more parts. During the activity the teacher should signalize the amount of remaining time.

The next step is to give the students space for any questions connected with the activity and its duration that they have. The last step is to give a significant signal when the students are allowed to start working on the preparation or performing.

During the performance the teacher needs to be aware of the fact that there is also a bigger chance that students will disobey and start communicating in their mother tongue because the class during pair or group work cannot be under “teacher’s continuous supervision” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 18). This situation can be avoided by setting rules considering the use of mother tongue in advance and by the teacher’s random observation of students’ performance and progress in the activity. The observation enables the teacher to know whether or not the students are working on the given task and are practising the English language, which is necessary for the success of the activity.

When students’ performance in a communicative activity is finished, it is not the end of the learning procedure. What follows is a very important part of learning process and it is the evaluation of the students’ performance.

### **3.4. Stage of evaluation**

After the students’ performance the evaluation of the performance has to be carried out. The evaluation consists of providing feedback to the activity, assessment of the performance and correction of mistakes and inconveniences that students made during their performance.

### **3.4.1. Feedback**

Feedback “is an essential part of the activity as a whole and may provide a setting for some valuable learning” (Ur, 1981, p. 23). It provides students and the teacher with information about how successfully the activity was performed and what needs to be improved or changed. During the feedback the teacher should inform students not only about their mistakes and inconveniences that appeared in their speech but also about their achievements and successes.

The first feedback that students can get is completion of given task. The “successful completion of the task is itself an indication that communication has been effective” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 91). The failure of completion indicates that some inconveniences appeared. In some cases, the students can recognize the result by themselves; in other cases, the success or the failure of completion needs to be confirmed by the teacher. The teacher should be aware of the fact that different types of speaking activities will enable and require different kinds of feedback.

In pre-communicative activities a teacher “will need to provide feedback relating to linguistic form” but “it does not necessarily exclude communicative feedback” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 91). The teacher needs to react not only to the form which students used to express themselves but also the teacher should react to the meaning of what the students have said. The same applies to communicative activities when both communicative as well as structural feedback should be provided.

During role-plays “the feedback is provided by the reactions of the teacher or (especially) of other learners” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 91). The teacher should give a comment on the overall impression of the performance, on the language variety, the correct use of language forms and language functions, the fluency and relevancy of speech, and the completion of the task. When giving feedback to a role-play, the teacher should consider whether it was a performance prepared in advance or a spontaneous performance without preparation.

After discussion and games feedback should be used as an opportunity “to supply all the necessary solutions, to answer queries as far as possible, and to give students time and scope for exploring conflicts and differences” (Ur, 1981, p. 23). Students should get the chance to ask for explanations, clarification or just to express their own opinions.

However, it is not only the teacher's task to provide feedback. The teacher should also give students time to evaluate and comment on their own performance because "the ability to monitor and evaluate one's own progress promotes more effective learning" (Prodromou, 1992, p. 13). Being able to realise their own weaknesses and strengths is a very useful skill that students should learn because if they are able to make self-evaluation of their own actions in the classroom, they will most probably be able to do the same in their real lives, which will be beneficial especially in their future professions.

Providing feedback to students' performance is essential and very beneficial for the learning process. One part of feedback is a general evaluation of the performance as a whole; the other part is correction of errors that occurred during the speaking activities.

### **3.4.2. Errors and correction**

The aim of correction is to prevent errors "from being fixed in the learners' speech" (Littlewood, 1981, p. 19). Correction of speech during a communicative activity should focus mainly on errors of meaning or of use. The teacher can use the students' mother tongue to ensure that the students will understand clearly what was wrong.

The teacher should be aware of the fact that errors are "a natural outcome of the development of communication skills" (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p.129). Therefore, they should be tolerated and during the correction they should be treated gently. The students should be informed about mistakes they make and provided with enough practice in order to try to avoid making the same mistakes repeatedly.

Making mistakes should never become a fear and the reason for not participating in speaking activities. To avoid these situations the teacher should be "encouraging the right attitude to error" (Prodromou, 1992, p. 21). Such an attitude will not stress students when asked to speak in front of the class. The teacher should also explain to students "that we learn by our mistakes and that everyone in the class is apt to make mistakes" (Dobson, 1989, p. 12). When students realise this fact, they will not laugh at each other, the atmosphere in the classroom will be more pleasant and students will be more comfortable to speak freely.

During communicative activities teacher should not correct the students' speech too much and too often because "excessive correction will encourage learners to shift their focus from meaning to form" (Littlewood, 1981, p. 91). For this reason, the structural mistakes or errors should be corrected after the communicative activity is finished. The only mistakes to

be corrected during the communicative activity are those that affect the meaning of the students' speech. Postponing the correction will enable students to perform without interruption and will support the development of fluency in their speech.

Correction is an important phase in the learning process, but due to the fact that there is not only one right way to correct errors, a teacher should treat every situation individually, especially when the corrections will affect the evaluation during assessing the students' performance in activities that are used to test their gained knowledge and acquired skills.

### **3.4.3. Assessment**

Making assessments is a way of evaluating students' oral performance in the lesson. There are two main types of assessments. The first type is an on-going assessment that evaluates the students' progress. The on-going assessment focusing on language functions needs to consider the amount of actively used functions and adequacy of their use. Such an assessment can be carried out by the teacher as well as by the students themselves in the form of observations, evaluation sheets and portfolios. The second type is testing and closer look will be turned to it now.

At first, when testing the language functions, it is important for the teacher to decide what the assessing and testing will be focused on. Then the teacher has to choose and set the task for the tested speaking activity. Finally, the teacher needs to define the criteria according to which students will be assessed.

The assessments of students' oral performance should evaluate "how fluent and accurate they are, what strategies they use to keep the interaction going and get their message across, and how well they take the listener into account" (Luoma, 2004, p. 187). From the accuracy point of view, the assessment should consider the correctness of the used linguistic forms, especially of the phrases of language functions. Other aspects of oral production to be evaluated are the range of vocabulary used during the performance, pronunciation of words and sentences, and intonation. From the fluency point of view, the teacher should consider the amount of hesitation, continuity of speech as well as continuity of expressed ideas during the performance, in other words, coherence. Moreover, interaction and ability to negotiate should be also evaluated. From the point of view of the use of language functions, their logic use, social adequacy and variety used should be assessed.



The teacher needs to consider all those criteria and choose or order them according to the purpose of testing and assessing. Then the teacher should create a testing scale accordingly. The testing scale for assessing oral production and conversation should be set in advance to enable the assessing to be as objective as possible. The teacher should “specify rules for deriving the overall score” (Luoma, 2004, p. 71). The teacher has a possibility to assess the performance intuitively according to the overall impression. The other option is to create a chart of criteria into which notes about the performance will be written during the activity and the assessment will be made according to the findings and noted information. The teacher should ensure that the “criteria are conceptually independent” (Luoma, 2004, p. 80). This means that scoring badly in one criterion will not affect the scoring in the others.

Assessment is an important part of learning process because it informs the students about their strengths and weaknesses. It provides them with information about improvements they either have made or should aim to make. The assessment is also a feedback for the teacher. It indicates how well the students are progressing in the learning process and what aspects of the language and its use need to be practiced further in the future.

From the point of view of one activity, feedback, correction and assessment are the final steps. However, from the point of view of learning process, they are the tools providing connections between activities and the tools used for evaluating the students’ progress during the time.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

Generally speaking, it is the teacher who is creating the supportive and motivating atmosphere for students’ performance during communicative language lessons. The students should be taught to use different communicative strategies and language functions that could help them to manage difficulties with expressing themselves more clearly, meaningfully and adequately. This development is enabled also by the correct choice of task and activities for communication practice, which needs to be well organised. The instructions given by the teacher should be clear and their understanding needs to be checked before students are divided into groups or pairs according to the type of the activity. During the performance the teacher should be checking the students’ performance in order to provide them with a complex and relevant feedback accompanied by the correction of main mistakes and

inconveniences. In case the skills and knowledge of functions are tested, the teacher should assess the students according to criteria set in advance, which enable him or her to be as objective as possible. Being communicatively competent is a very complex skill that needs a lot of attention from both the teacher and the students in order to be mastered appropriately.

#### **4. Thesis**

The appropriate choice of activities that include the use of different language functions as well as interactive and communicative elements can help learners to express themselves meaningfully, fluently and be socially adequate in their communication. Therefore, the learners' speech will become more efficient for the purposes of the real life.

## **5. Practical project**

### **5.1. Design of the project**

The design of the project results from different sources of information. Based on the data collected from the sources, the criteria for the activity design and the tools for assessment of the project are formulated.

#### **5.1.1. Study of literature**

The first source of data collection was the literature which I studied and used when preparing the theoretical and methodological part of this Diploma Thesis. From the study of literature it is possible to generalize several outcomes important for designing the project.

A real communication is an interaction among people, usually face-to face. To enable an effective communication, the interaction needs to be purposeful and socially adequate. In order to enable the same conditions for communication in the classroom, students need to learn strategies to be communicatively competent and need to learn how to use different language functions according to the social context.

In the classroom, the teacher has to create stimulating and supportive environment. For the design of activities it is also important to realize that students will not be able to perform a communicative activity at the beginning of learning a foreign language. Therefore, pre-communicative activities will need to be used as training activities for the intention of doing communicative activities in the future. The main aim of the activities that will be used or designed in this project is to teach students communicative skills and provide them with the knowledge of phrases of language functions in order for the students to be able to use them in real life situations outside the classroom.

#### **5.1.2. Semi-structured interview**

The second source of collecting data was a semi-structured interview, carried out with the teacher of the classes where I will run the project. I wanted the teacher to reveal how she is organising speaking and communicative activities and whether the students are used to speaking independently in pairs and groups and what level of the language they have or

should have. The aim was to get to know the learning procedure that the students are used to and to get an idea what activities can be planned for these classes.

The main outcome of the interview is the finding that the students are used to doing speaking activities regularly. Drills are frequently used especially in the first years of language learning. The other frequently occurring activities are question-answer practice, monologues and dialogues. During the communicative activities students are being asked to work in pairs and groups independently. The teacher requires independence from the early beginning when the younger students work only in pairs in order to provide all students with equal time for practice and to make all students participate. All the students are under constant supervision of the teacher although the older ones do not require so much support as the younger ones. The students usually require a help with vocabulary and clarification of instructions. The instructions are mostly explained in English, even to beginners.

The students are required to know all the vocabulary and grammar mentioned in the textbooks and in addition, the teacher enlarges the amount of vocabulary. Additional activities focused on speaking are games, question-answer practice and monologue or dialogue performances. The teacher is correcting mistakes according to the focus of an activity, either on accuracy or fluency. For the correction, the teacher uses the rules and advises in the same way as mentioned in the methodological part. In evaluation of speaking activities the main criteria are grammar mistakes and diversity of the used vocabulary without considering any other aspects, which is not according to what was stated earlier in the methodological part.

Based on all that has just been mentioned, the following conclusions were made. These students are not expected to require a long time for preparing their own scripts for the speaking activities and deep explanations and trial runs of the procedures because activities that they will be asked to do are familiar to them. The disadvantage of the students' experiences is the possibility that a big development of students' communicative competence might not be proved at the end of the project. However, there may be a bigger chance to notice how the use of the new language functions changed the meaningfulness and adequacy of the students' conversations.

### **5.1.3. Analysis of students' textbooks**

The third source of data collection was the analysis of the students' textbooks, which are being used in the classes. One aim of the analysis was to search for all the language

functions and the phrases used and to make their list. The other aim was to identify what kind of speaking activities and especially communicative activities the students are usually asked to perform. The list and the findings will become the fundamental elements according to which the choice of phrases will be made and the content and context of activities will be decided. The kind of used activities for this project will be either chosen on the basis of the found activities and if needed modified or fully prepared as a new additional activity.

The analysis of the textbook “Project 3” (Hutchinson, 2000) showed that even the speaking activities for the eighth and ninth classes are mainly pre-communicative activities. There is a double amount of the pre-communicative activities and the activity that primarily occurs is answering questions before or after the reading and listening activities, in which students do not apply their own opinions or their real-life experiences. The activities requiring students’ own experiences occur in average only once in each chapter.

Several times activities focused on the communication occurred. However, it was a disappointing finding that more than half of the dialogue performance activities asked students to remake the dialogue and only to read the script they have created. Therefore, this kind of activity is not really communicative practice. It would be much more valuable if students were asked to role-play the script they have prepared. When students were asked in the textbook to role-play, they were asked to perform the text in the exact form as it was written there. Therefore, the students can not be at all initiative and communicative, which is the reason why role-plays were labelled as a pre-communicative activity in the chart bellow.

The main language functions that appeared in the textbook were (ordered according the quantity of appearance): describing, asking, narrating, suggesting, requesting, refusing, accepting, reasoning, giving directions, offering, providing decisions, giving predictions and permissions, forbidding and also responding to the functions mentioned if it is possible. The social language functions as greeting, thanking, or apologising were not explicitly listed in the textbook but they appeared as a part of dialogues that the students were asked to read, rewrite or perform. The list of the mentioned phrases and expressions, is placed in the appendix 1. They will be used when choosing and creating activities for the classroom practice.

For the classroom practice and the project activity design this analysis means that modifications, especially of dialogue performance activities, will be required and also that new activities will need to be prepared, such as purely functional activities. Most of the phrases of language functions can be used in the project. However, there will be a need to add new ones as well.

The chart bellow is only a summary of the types of the activities:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Kind of activity</b>	<b>Focus on</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Answer – Rd/Ls	Pre-communicative	understanding a text	55
Dialogue	Communicative ?	communication	14
Discussion	Communicative	communication	13
Make sentences	Pre-communicative	grammar, accuracy	11
Ask/answer	Pre-communicative	accuracy of speech	10
Monologue	Communicative	fluency of speech	9
Role-play text	Pre-communicative	accuracy of speech	8
Answer – personal Qs	Communicative	own opinion and experience	7
Drill	Pre-communicative	accuracy of speech	1
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Pre-communicative</b> <b>Communicative</b>		<b>85</b> <b>43</b>

#### 5.1.4. Observation

Another source of data collection was an observation of student's oral performances before the project started. The aim was to obtain information about what phrases students actively used and what mistakes students made in connection with these phrases. The conclusion made on the basis of those findings should be a decision of what activities to plan for this project and what phrases to teach.

The observation of the students in the third class revealed that students were able to use the learned and practiced language functions without any mistakes. The reason for this accuracy is that the students usually know only one form of a language function and the form is well memorised due to its constant drilling and regular practice.

The students in the fifth class were able to greet, to introduce themselves and apologise without any problems. Slight problems that did not affect the meaningfulness of the conversation appeared when the students were introducing other people, asking about preferences and complaining. Major problems affecting conversation did not occur due to the fact that the topics that the students talk about are very basic and do not allow many varieties.

The observation showed that the students in the ninth class were able to greet, to introduce themselves, to give directions and to inform about their own hobbies without any problems. The correctness is the result of the regular practice during the several years of the language learning. The students expressed themselves clearly but in very simple forms when describing, complaining and agreeing. Problems occurred when students were offering and

refusing. Most of the students had problems to express themselves when trying to give a reason and to suggest different options. The reason for unintelligibility was the use of similarly formed phrases but of a different function.

For the project it is important to include into the activities the phrases that were just mentioned as problematic or used by the students in very simple forms. The chart of expressed language functions is placed in the appendix 2.

#### **5.1.5. Questionnaire**

The last source of data collection was a questionnaire that was given to the students at the beginning of my teaching practice. The aim was to elicit from the students what attitude they had to the English lessons and how they evaluated their performance in communicative activities in general.

The questionnaire was given to students in the ninth class where I was allowed to teach for a longer period of time. The students' preferred subject is informatics and English language belongs among the more favoured half of the chosen subjects. The popular activities in the English language lessons are speaking, especially dialogue role-playing, and listening. The unpopular activity that was frequently mentioned is testing.

Although the students evaluated their speaking skill in comparison to reading, writing and listening quite highly, they still evaluate their performances in role-playing slightly above the border line of the average marking. As the main problems, they marked the insufficient knowledge of vocabulary and the fact that they do not know how to ask and answer. In other words, they do not know either the language functions at all or they are not able to use them actively. The questionnaire form and its examples are to be found in the appendix 3.

The important points relating to the aim of the project are that students in general like English lessons, they enjoy speaking activities and are used to doing them. Therefore, they should be willing to participate and there will be no need for detailed explanations of what is expected from them to perform. However, the students should still largely benefit from the practice of the phrases of different functions that will be carried out before the students' performance of role-playing.

The research shows that for the choice and design of effective communicative activities it is important to choose suitable language functions which the students use incorrectly or which the students need to express but do not have the necessary tools.

#### **5.1.6. Criteria for the activity design**

Based on all the above data, the following criteria of the activities design were formulated. The activities should be:

- a) communicative: force students to communicate
  - 1. contain an information gap
  - 2. contain a problem to be solved
  - 3. contain a real-life task
- b) interactive: support students' interaction
- c) rich of the possible use of language functions
  - 1. contain "pure" language functions
  - 2. contain communicative functions
- d) adequate to the students'
  - 1. age
  - 2. level of acquired communicative skills
  - 3. level of gained language knowledge
  - 4. life experiences, culture and interests.

#### **5.1.7. Forms of evaluation**

Detailed description and outcomes of the final analyses will be closely dealt with in the concluding chapters. Below is only a list of planned forms of evaluation that will be used

- a) reflections
- b) observation
- c) evaluation of tests
- d) questionnaire.



## **5.2. Teaching practice**

### **5.2.1. Class description**

The research was conducted at ZŠ U Školy, where were led the short-term activities, and at ZŠ Vrchlického, where were led the long-term activities. The third and the fourth class at ZŠ U Školy as well as the 5<sup>th</sup> class at the ZŠ Vrchlického were mixed ability classes of no precise specialisation, in which students of various language potentials were. However, in those classes there were no students of special needs that would require individual plan or special care during the lessons.

The class which I mainly used for the long-term research was the 9<sup>th</sup> class, where 18 students were. The students in general are talkative, used to working independently and quite creative, which is all beneficial for the purposes of the practical project. There are two students in the class whose English is on a higher level than the English of the rest of the class. Those students will require preparing activities which will contain a challenging task or preparing an extra activity in case they are finished earlier than the rest of the students.

There are also several students who appear not to be so talented for the English language and they tend to participate less in the lessons. However, the reason for such behaviour is mainly not lower ability to learn the language but the lack of interest in learning itself. In order to motivate the students to participate during the lessons it will be necessary to choose interesting topics or tasks that would provoke students' imagination and willingness to join the lesson actively and voluntarily so that they would not feel as being forced to do the task against their own will.

Due to the fact that the students are nearly finishing the textbook Project 3, they know almost all the required grammar and vocabulary and are acquainted with various themes. Therefore, there will not be many limitations to the choice of topics, context and required knowledge.

The school conditions enable the use of data projector, interactive blackboard and lots of extra materials as books, worksheets and magazines for the students if needed. The research took place in a typical classroom, where the students sat in the rows of desks facing the blackboard or forming a horseshoe. The mentor sat at the back of the class and observed the lessons when I was teaching. When the students were performing dialogues we both sat at the back of the class; the mentor was in charge of the organisation and evaluation of the performances while I was taking notes about the performances for my research.

For the activities design I used activities from Littlewood's (1981) categorisation of speaking activities as shown in the chart below:

<b>1. Functional activities</b>	
Activity	Description
<b>With restricted cooperation</b>	
Identify picture	by asking questions students are discovering slight differences in similar pictures, which they do not show to each other (differences of objects, their position and amount)
Discover identical pair	by asking questions or giving a clue students are to find a partner who has the same picture
Discover sequence or location	by asking question students have to order set of pictures or find the place in the map where the other student has drawn a person or an object
Discover missing information	by asking questions students need to complete a chart, picture, timetable or map; each student has only a part of needed information
Discover secret	by asking only yes/no questions students are to discover and guess a profession, object, activity ...
<b>With unrestricted cooperation</b>	
Draw a picture	by asking questions or according given instruction students should create the same picture or pattern
Discover differences	by asking questions students are identifying differences of two or more pictures, patterns (differences of shape, size, colour)
Follow instruction	according given instruction students are to draw a route into a map or construct an object
<b>Sharing information</b>	
Reconstructing story	by giving description and discussing students should order pictures without showing them to each other (in a group each student has a picture)
Pool information to solve a problem	each student is provided with a part of needed information and students have to solve a problem e.g. discover the fastest way (arrival or departure times) or plan a town visit (opening or closing times)
<b>Processing information</b>	
Discuss and evaluate facts	by discussing the facts and options find a suitable solution or compromise e.g. plan a visit of a town (choose what to see) or decide what to take for a trip (weight limit)
Make a story	students are to create a story with given words (person, animal, objects, actions, adj., adv. ...)
End the story	students are to guess how a story will develop further and then students discuss their ideas or compare them with original end if revealed

<b>2. Social interaction activities</b>	
Activity	Description
Dialogue performance	students act according to text in the book or on the tape (copy the dialogue)
Role-play	students act dialogue that they prepared and constructed either with or without help and hint 1. learners act themselves in a simulated situation 2. learners adopt a simulated identity
Role-play improvisation	students act without preparation and on the basis of given task and background information 1. learners act themselves in a simulated situation 2. learners adopt a simulated identity
Debate and discussion	students are defending and supporting their own opinions or opinion of the person of adopted identity in order to get a solution or get more information
Dramatisation	acting of sketches, jokes and real life situations according a script; with rehearsals and used props; focused on speech, as well as facial expression and movement on stage

## 5.2.2. Lesson plans and reflexions

### 5.2.2.1. Plan 1

**Class description:** 3<sup>rd</sup> class, 14 students, beginners, ZŠ U Školy

<b>Context</b>	Animals and monsters		
<b>Aim</b>	to improve students' skills in describing to revise and use vocabulary connected with animals and pets		
<b>Objectives</b>	students will be able to describe a monster students will be able to instruct the other students		
<b>Expected knowledge</b>	<b>vocabulary:</b> colours, numbers, animals, parts of body, adjectives of description <b>grammar:</b> 'be' and 'have got' in present simple, orders		
<b>Functions</b>	orders, giving instructions, describing		
<b>Phrases</b>	It has got ...	Draw ...	It is (not) correct.
<b>Activity</b>	communicative activity - guided - give and follow instruction - functional communicative activity with unrestricted cooperation		
<b>Material</b>	flashcards and pictures - animals, parts of animal bodies pictures of drawn monsters, paper sheets - blank, blackboard		

<b>Motivation</b>	pictures of funny monsters, memory game, movement during an activity
<b>Work org.</b>	pair work, (whole class - revision)
<b>Time</b>	25-30 minutes

The activity was a part of a lesson that focused on practising the vocabulary of animals and parts of bodies. After checking the students' homework, the students switched to communication as is described in following activity. After the activity described bellow, the lesson followed by writing descriptions of animals in the workbooks.

Materials used for this lesson and examples of the students' pictures are placed in the appendix 4.

## Steps

### Stage 1: Revision (7 min)

aim: to warm up and motivate the students

to introduce the topic

to revise needed vocabulary and language forms

objectives: students will be able to recall needed vocabulary and language forms

students will be able to use the phrases in a context under teacher's supervision

1. The teacher asks students to name their favourite animals: "*What is your favourite animal?*". The students answer: "*It is a/an ...*".
2. The teacher shows pictures of animals and parts of their body. The students name them. The teacher asks: "*What is it?*". The students answer: "*It is a/an ...*".
3. The teacher shows pictures of animals. The students give a one-sentence description of the animal's characteristic after one teacher's trial run. The teacher asks: "*What has the dog/elephant got?*". The students answer: "*It has got ...*". In chorus students respond to the answer: "*It is correct.*" or "*It is not correct.*".

### Stage 2: Teacher's trial run (5 min)

aim: to get students familiar with the following procedure

to show students what they will be required to do

to make instructions clear

objectives: students will understand the instruction

students will experience the drawing according to given instructions

1. The teacher gives an explanation of the activity procedures.
2. Every student is given three sheets of blank paper. Every student prepares a pencil.
3. The teacher gives description of a picture of a monster. The students draw according to the instructions. E.g. *"It has got a big head and a small body. Draw a big head and a small body. It has got three eyes and two long legs. Draw three eyes. Draw ..."*.
4. The teacher shows the picture to students after they have finished drawing. Students check their drawn picture with the teacher's original picture and give a comment using the phrase: *"It is correct."* or *"It is not correct."*.

### Stage 3: Free speaking performance (10 min)

aim: to practice language structures in context and

to teach students giving instructions

to improve students' speaking skills during interaction with the classmates

objectives: students will be able to instruct the other students

students will be able to react to the other students' actions

students will be able to cooperate with each other

students will be able to follow instructions and draw accordingly

1. The students are divided into pairs.
2. The teacher sticks another picture of a monster on a chair facing a wall, not the class, so that the students do not see it.
3. In pairs one student goes to see the picture. The other student draws the picture according to given instructions by the other student. The first student can return to the picture in order to recall it. The students use phrases: *"It has got ..."*, *"Draw ..."* and *"It is good."* or *"It is not good."*.

Student 1: see - remember - say

Student 2: listen - understand - draw

4. Picture is revealed when the drawing is finished. Teacher asks: *"Is your picture good or not good?"*. The students answer: *"It is correct."* or *"It is not correct."*.
5. The teacher exchanges the pictures. Then the students swap their roles.

#### Stage 4: Commentary (4 min)

aim: to make students evaluate themselves

to provide a feedback to students' performance

objectives: students will be able to evaluate their own products and products of the classmates

students will be able to express their own opinion

note: if needed it is possible to use the mother tongue since making and presenting students' own opinion is much more valuable in this stage than the language practice

10. The students give their comment. The teacher can stimulate the students by asking leading questions: *"What do you like about your/ your schoolmates' pictures?"* or *"Why is the picture not correct?"* or *"Did you have any problems during the activity? What did you have problems with?"*.

11. The teacher comments on the activity and provides his or her evaluation to the pictures.

### **Reflection**

At the beginning the students joined the revision very enthusiastically. Due to the fact that the students knew the word they all wanted to tell me the names of animals and part of their bodies and it was impossible to try calling out students individually. Therefore, the students were let naming in the pictures in chorus. When giving one-sentence descriptions, the students required a translation of other parts of the animals' bodies that they had not learned yet. Therefore, the requested vocabulary was written on the board and the students copied them into their vocabularies. However, this vocabulary wasn't required as compulsory neither for the following activity of description nor for the other lessons.

The students really enjoyed giving description of the monsters to their partners and they even wanted to take turns again. The activity for its popularity was repeated twice in some of the following lessons, in which it usually lasted only 5 minutes. The mentor, who observed the lesson, said that the activity was well planned and really motivating. As far as I can say the students really enjoyed the activity and all progressed very well and according to the plan.

In order to clarify their own instructions or showing disagreement with what the other students were drawing, the students started naturally use simple phrases of the needed functions, such as "Big?", "Three eyes?", "Yes, a big head." or "No, two legs ... four legs." It would be possible to introduce needed phrases of such functions before the activity started

and practice them. However, for the purposes and the aim of the activity I would personally not recommend it since the students would be overloaded with various phrases and might struggle to use all of them in one activity and consequently their speech might not be fluent and neither natural. The reason for my decision is that the students at this age are easily able to find their own way to express what they need as has been proved by the students' use of the simple phrases.

During the activity the students used required phrases without any major mistakes since the activity was a revision of the grammar pattern. Even when working alone, the students tend to use whole sentences when providing the description. The students had an option to choose the phrase. Only two pairs of students simplified the sentences and used the form "Draw ...". These students were the ones of better English knowledge who were able to adapt more quickly to the use of new phrases. The rest of the class remained using the phrase "It has got ..." because they felt more confident when using the already known phrase. When students were drawing the monsters for the third time in one of the following lessons nearly three quarters of the students used the phrase "Draw" since it is the easier phrase to be used and expresses the exact order the students wanted to give.

When evaluating the activity and the drawn products, the students used mainly the mother tongue and usually commented on the difference in their drawings and on the problems they had when they were to clearly describe the picture to the partner. However, the activity became spontaneously suitable for explaining the meaning of "are the same" and "are different" as the students had a need to comment on their drawn products and tried to provide their opinion in the English. The need was the result of the situation when at the beginning the monsters that the students had drawn looked differently but at the end as the students got the style of my drawing, the monsters looked similar. The ability to draw nearly identical pictures really pleased the students.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the activity reached the set aim. It proved that in general, students are able to use actively those phrases that they have been practicing regularly and have had time to learn them. However, the main precondition for this is the fact that they already have needed vocabulary and structures that are a basis for the functional phrases.

From the long-term point of view, when students are let to choose a phrase from a group of phrases of the same function and the choice depends on the students' own decision,

students preferably choose those phrases that are either simpler in the structure or more precisely represent the intended meaning.

#### 5.2.2.2. Plan 2

**Class description:** 4<sup>h</sup> class, 12 students, ZŠ U Školy

<b>Context</b>	My dream room		
<b>Aim</b>	to improve students' ability of questioning and answering; to revise prepositions of place		
<b>Objectives</b>	students will be able to provide a description of a room; students will be able to ask for a location		
<b>Expected knowledge</b>	<b>vocabulary:</b> rooms and furniture <b>grammar:</b> prepositions of place, 'be' in the present simple tense		
<b>Functions</b>	describing, asking for clarification		
<b>Phrases</b>	There is ...	Is there ... ?	Yes, there is. No, there isn't.
<b>Activity</b>	communicative activity - semi-guided - monologue		
<b>Material</b>	students' pictures of rooms, blackboard		
<b>Motivation</b>	use of students' own pictures, guessing game		
<b>Work org.</b>	individual work, pair work		
<b>Time</b>	25-30 minutes		

The activity was a part of a lesson that focused on practicing the vocabulary of furniture and prepositions of place. In the previous lessons students learned and practiced vocabulary of furniture and rooms. At the end of the previous lesson, the students drew their dream rooms and wrote down the names of the drawn furniture.

After the activity described bellow, the lesson followed by listening to a song (using prepositions of place) that students had learned by heart and then by drawing objects into a picture in the workbooks according to the provided description.

Materials used for this lesson and examples of the students' pictures are placed in the appendix 5.



## Steps

### Stage 1: Revision (7 min)

aim: to warm up and motivate the students

to introduce the topic

to revise needed vocabulary and language forms

to fix the phrases

objectives: students will be able to recall needed vocabulary and language forms

students will be able to use prepositions of place

1. The teacher asks students to name their favourite room: "*What is your favourite room in your house or flat?*". The students answer: "*It is the ...*".
2. The teacher shows pictures of furniture and rooms. The students name them. The teacher asks: "*What is it?*". The students answer: "*It is a/an ...*".
3. The teacher asks the students to get up. Then the teacher instructs the students to change their position in relation to their chairs, tables or other objects in the classroom. E.g. "*Stand next to/behind/in front of your chair!*" The students act accordingly.

### Stage 2: Teacher's trial run (5 min)

aim: to get students familiar with the following procedure

to show students what they will be required to do

to make instructions clear

objectives: students will understand the instructions

students will know what they will be expected to do

1. The teacher gives an explanation of the activity procedures.
2. The teacher gives description of the picture of the room that she had drawn on the board. E.g. "*This is my dream room. There is a big table in my room. There are two red chairs next to the table. There is ...*". The teacher deliberately makes a mistake in the provided description. The students listen in order to spot the difference and to get an idea what they will be expected to do later.
3. The students are asked to tell the difference and the correct answer. The teacher asks: "*What is wrong? What is or what is not in the picture?*". The students answer: "*There is not ... There is ... in the picture*".

### Stage 3: Free speaking performance (10 min)

aim: to practice language structures in context

to teach students giving description

to improve students' speaking skills during interaction with the classmates

objectives: students will be able to give description

students will be able to listen for detail

students will be able to connect visual and auditory perception

1. The students are divided into pairs.
2. Every student prepares his or her picture of their dream room (drawn in the previous lesson). The students are divided into pairs.
3. In pairs one student gives description of his or her dream room. The other student checks whether the description corresponds with the picture. The students use phrases: "*There is ...*" and "*There are ...*".

Student 1: say

Student 2: listen - note mistakes in description

4. The student that listened reveals the mistake: "*There is not ... There is ... in your picture*".
5. Then the students swap their roles.

### Stage 4: Commentary (4 min)

aim: to make students evaluate themselves

to provide a feedback to students' performance

objectives: students will be able to evaluate their performances

students will be able to express their own opinion

note: if needed it is possible to use the mother tongue since making and presenting students' own opinion is much more valuable in this stage than the language practice

10. The students are asked to give their comment. The teacher can stimulate the students by asking leading questions: "*Did you find the mistake?*" or "*What was the mistake?*".
11. The teacher comments on the activity and provides her evaluation of the students' performance.

## **Reflection**

At the beginning the students were not very active and did not want to cooperate. The reason was that it was the very first lesson and the students were not fully concentrated on the learning process and seemed very sleepy. Since they did not want to answer the question what their favourite rooms are, I decided to let them stand up and act according to my instructions. I even asked the students to come in front of the blackboard and out of the class so that they really had to move around. This change of the order of planned activities really helped to stimulate the students to join the lesson actively. Whether or not the students changed their own position according to the given instructions was an immediate proof of the students' understanding of the meaning of the prepositions, which was a very beneficial feedback. Some students hesitated and waited for the other students to act first when I used prepositions 'in front of' and 'in'. Therefore, I added those prepositions in the revision several times so that the students had a chance to practice them more.

After this physical warming up, the students were more willing to answer my question about their favourite room and name the furniture and rooms that were shown on the flashcards. The students were able to name all the rooms and furniture because this was a revision of the vocabulary that the students learned and practiced in the previous lessons.

When I was describing my dream room, the students recognised the hidden mistake. However, I am convinced that not all the students noticed the difference since some students looked blankly and not all of them raised their hand when I asked the students to name the difference. The suggestion for the next time in order to prove which students noticed the difference and which did not is to ask students to write the difference into their exercise books. Therefore, I had decided to ask the students who were to listen to the description of his or her partner in the following activity to write down the noticed mistakes in order to be later able to inform about their discovery.

The students provided a description of their dream rooms quite naturally and fluently due to the fact that the students are used to providing a short monologues of descriptions in the English language lessons. However, some students had a problem to include the mistake in the description. The situation when the students provided correct description and their partner had nothing to note down occurred several times. Such students were asked to perform the description again and this time with the included mistake. In one case a mistake of incorrect understanding of the preposition was discovered when a student made a mistake but

it was not the intended one. The pairs which finished earlier repeated the descriptions with a different mistake included in order to keep them occupied.

The commentary gained from the students was focused on the announcement of the mistakes and the fact that sometimes the mistake was not included. The students did not judge the performances of themselves and of their partners. I did not forced the students to make their own judgements since they felt very uncomfortable in those situations in the previous lessons. I asked the students only to draw a face into their exercise books according to how they enjoyed the activity. Over three fourths of the students drew a happy face, only once an unhappy face appeared. In general, the students enjoyed the activity of discovering the mistakes hidden in the provided description.

## Conclusion

The students were very successful in providing the description because they are used to performing such monologues regularly. Therefore, an improvement in the fluency of the student's speech was not so significantly noticed. However, the students became more confident in performing the description when the activity has been repeated. The aim of the activity was reached and even if it was not purely due to the practice in the revision stages of this lesson because the students undertake the regular practice in the English language lessons, the revision helped them recall all the useful phrases.

### 5.2.2.3. Plan 3

**Class description:** 9<sup>th</sup> class, 18 students, ZŠ Vrchlického

<b>Context</b>	Every day life situations
<b>Aim</b>	to learn to apply all the learned language knowledge in the dialogues, to improve students' ability to speak naturally and to respond
<b>Objectives</b>	students will be able to apply all the learned knowledge; after a short preparation students will be able to act various situations; students will be able to respond to the other students' speech
<b>Expected knowledge</b>	<b>vocabulary:</b> all learned <b>grammar:</b> all learned
<b>Functions</b>	of students' own choice

<b>Phrases</b>	of students' own choice
<b>Activity</b>	communicative activity - free - role-plays - social interactive activity
<b>Material</b>	list of topics, mini-cards with numbers (1-12) mini-cards with numbers(two same sets (1-9) sheets with a chart and phrases blackboard, dictionaries
<b>Motivation</b>	creativity, cooperation, real life situation, real objects (apple, tea box, plastic injection and cups, handbag, hats, toy ...)
<b>Work org.</b>	pair work
<b>Time</b>	2-3 lessons

Materials used for this lesson are placed in the appendix 6.

## Steps

Stage 1: Introduction (5 min)

aim: to warm up and motivate the students

to introduce the topic

objectives: students will be able to imagine everyday situations from their own lives

students will name English versions of several phrases they regularly use in their mother tongue

1. The teacher greets the students: *"Good morning!"* The students answer appropriately. Then the teacher continues as in real communication and waits for the students' responses: *"Nice to meet you."* ... *"How are you today?"* ... *"What did you do yesterday?"* ... *"How interesting."* ...
3. The teacher asks the students: *"What do you do every day/regularly?"* The students brainstorm actions and situations according to their own experiences.
4. The teacher chooses the suitable situations (for the purposes of the activity that will follow) that the students had named and asks the students: *"What do you say to the others when you get up?"*, *"What do you say to the shop assistant when you enter the shop?"* or *"What do you say to your brother when he talks to you while you are doing your homework?"*. The students provide answers according to their own experiences.

## Stage 2: Revision (20 min)

aim: to revise the meaning of the provided phrases

to make students aware of the possible various uses of the provided phrases

to revise needed vocabulary and language forms

objectives: students will be able to recall needed vocabulary and language forms

students will be able to match phrases to topics

1. The teacher gives an explanation of the activity procedures. The students are divided into pairs.
2. Every student gets a sheet with a chart and phrases.
3. In pairs the students match the phrases with the corresponding situations.
4. The students discuss their answers with the teacher and the rest of the class. The teacher asks: "*Which phrase is suitable for the topic 'x'?*" or "*Where else can we use this phrase?*".
5. The students create and brainstorm possible reactions to the provided phrases in order to prove understanding of their meaning and possible use. The teacher helps the students by leading questions: "*Imagine the situation when you ... What would you say?*" or "*What do you normally say when the other person says: 'I'm sorry.'*".

## Stage 3: Performance (10 min)

aim: to practice language structures in context and in various situations

to teach students to respond appropriately according to the played role

to improve students' speaking skills during interaction with the classmates

objectives: students will be able to prepare a script for a short dialogue

students will be able to participate in a dialogue

students will be able to choose suitable phrases for the given context

students will be able to use the phrases in the given context

criteria for dialogues: to start and finish the dialogue: greet, apologize, ...

to respond adequately according to the role

to accompany the dialogue with gestures, postures and movements

to exchange turns regularly (equal participation)

to use various phrases if possible

to use props when suitable

note: to check the used tense and vocabulary

1. The teacher gives explanation of the performance procedures. The students are divided into pairs and each pair chooses a topic.
2. The students in pairs prepare a dialogue. The students are allowed to use dictionaries or ask the teacher for a help. (5 min)
3. A pair role-plays their dialogue. (c. 2 min)

#### Stage 4: Commentary (4 min)

aim: to make students evaluate themselves

to provide a feedback to the students' performances

to correct inconveniences and mistakes

objectives: students will be able to evaluate their own and the other students' performances

students will be able to express their own opinion

students will be able to notice and correct inconveniences and mistakes that occur in their own and the other students' performance

note: if needed it is possible to use the mother tongue since making and presenting students' own opinions is much more valuable in this stage than the language practice

1. The rest of the students are asked to give a comment on the performance and on the noticed inconveniences. (2 min)
2. The teacher provides her comment and evaluation. (time as required, c. 2 min) When necessary the teacher provides clarification and deeper explanation of the used phrases, grammar and vocabulary in order to avoid the mistakes to occur again in the following dialogues and to be fixed in the students' memory.

Note: The procedure repeats until every pair has performed the dialogue: The other pairs role-play their dialogues. The students and the teacher provide their comments on the other performances.

3. The teacher provides the overall comment on the students' performances and the activity.

#### **Reflection**

At the beginning the students were a little bit confused by the different progress of the beginning of the lesson but they managed to respond to my questions and comments appropriately although not confidently and with hesitation. Then the students brainstormed a

lot of various actions they do regularly and they were quite creative when asked to give responses to described situations. Due to the fact that the students used their imagination and tried to create a lot of various options of possible reactions, the activity took much longer time than planned. Later on the performances showed that it was a very well spent time because the mentioned ideas gave the students a lot of stimuli for designing their own dialogues and helped them in the moments of improvisation.

During the revision stage the students managed to match given phrases with the topics and suggested a lot of other situations in which it is possible to use the phrases. It is true that some of the mentioned situations were controversial because the students suggested situations in which the phrase is not usually used. However, the activity showed to the students that some phrases have very limited use whereas some can be used nearly in every communicative situation.

When the students realized this fact about the use of the phrases, the dialogues created by the students became more spontaneous and the students many times burst into laugh during the preparation time of the dialogues. The spontaneity was also enabled due to the announcement that besides the grammar mistakes and used vocabulary will be also evaluated the logic structure as well as the originality of the dialogues. During the preparation, the students also availed the chance to use the dictionaries and especially to ask the teachers for help with vocabulary and expressions that the students were not able to recall or were not sure whether the words they chose were suitable for the situation they were asked to perform.

The chart bellow contains a transcript of the dialogues that the students performed. The chosen situation was 'Looking for a new partner (acquaintance agency)'. The differences between the performances before and after the revision prove that the students' oral performance improved. The students' speech became more natural and realistic.

In the previous lessons before the revision, the students' performances were very simple and contained only very basic sentences, as seen in the first column, because the students wanted to avoid making mistakes and getting a bad mark. After the revision the students became more confident in forming the dialogues and consequently, the dialogues were more complicatedly and realistically structured. As a result, the dialogues very closely resembled the real-life situations as seen in the second column in the chart below. The students even started to have fun during the role-plays and be less stressed. The performances started to contain a lot of elements of dramatization, such as gestures and emotions, as well as



filling words and natural responses showing feelings and opinions as seen in the transcript in the third column of the chart.

However, when the students further developed their dialogues, more mistakes appeared in the students' speech, as can be seen in the chart. The mistakes were caused by the choice and use of the phrases that the students did not have time to practice enough and to fix their correct forms in the memory. Later, during observations of the third and fourth round of the performances carried out in the following lessons, it was noticed that even those mistakes started to be less frequent. Naturally, it resulted in appearance of mistakes of more advanced level of the used language, which was caused by the students' gradual improvement and progress in creating the dialogues to be performed.

Note: In the first lesson only one dialogue was performed and the rest of the students were performing in the second and in a part of the third lesson, which continued by activities connected with reading an article in a magazine. In every lesson the students got some time for preparation in order to let the pairs recall the prepared dialogues and get the feeling of relating to each other.

The students' commentaries of their performances were carried out in the mother tongue. At the beginning, the students were reluctant to provide their own opinions because they did not want to criticize the others as they were afraid of the criticism of their own performances. However, as more dialogues were performed and the teacher gave her commentaries, the students were able to note good and less positive points of the performances according to the criteria that the teacher set. Sometimes the students were also suggesting improvements that would be beneficial for the next performance. The usually commented aspects were the originality of the performances, the occurred hesitation and the inconveniences related to realistic development of the performed situations. As a result of various suggestions, sometimes the comments developed into discussion concerning the everyday problems of the real life.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the activity was successful and reached its set aim because the students' oral performance of dialogues improved. The students benefited from the revision of the phrases and language functions. The students actively used mainly those phrases that more clearly expressed what the students intended to say. However, majority of the students did not start to

use the new phrases for which the students already had known equivalent expressions. From the long-term point of view the students' performances improved in term of fluency due to the regular practice that the teacher continued to include in the lessons after my teaching has finished.

Before group A	After group A	After group B
Good morning. Good morning. Nice to meet you. Me, too. How old are you? I'm 24. Do you study? Yes, I do. Do you like football? Yes, I do. And you? No, I don't. Bye. Bye.	Good morning. Good morning. Nice to meet you. For me, too. How old are you? I'm 25. And you? I'm 28. What is your job? I work in bank. And you? I study on the University of Techniques. What job do you want? I want a doctor. Do you have children? No, I don't. And you? No, I don't. Thank you. That's OK. See you soon. See you. Bye. Bye	Hi! Hi! Nice to meet you. What's your name? My name is ---. And you? My name is ---. What are your hobbies? I like hunting. What do you hunt? I hunt zebras, horses. Oh, what? Don't you like horses? I like horses. I have one. His name is Black. Can I hunt him? No! You are crazy! Bye. What? Why? ...
<u>Correction:</u>	<u>Correction:</u> Do you have <u>any</u> children? I want <u>to be</u> a doctor. I study at...	<u>Correction:</u> And <u>yours</u> ?

### Role play in the fifth class - reflexion

The same procedure has been conducted in the fifth class. The focused functions were: introduction, asking and giving personal information, apologising, agreeing, disagreeing and asking about preferences. Before the revision the students' performances looked very similarly because the students tended to put in the dialogues all the known and repeatedly practiced questions and corresponding answers although they did not follow exactly the instructions about the background information they were asked to perform.

The students had prepared the dialogues partially and then improvised when performing. Therefore, they always ended by asking about the name of all the members of their family or about ability to do sports and other actions they were able to name. The students had to usually be stopped by the teacher and as a result they did not finish the conversation naturally as it would happen in real life. The shopping dialogues were very basic and missed several language functions, such as offering or asking for a price, which would be expressed in real situations. The dialogues were also very choppy because the students usually divided the part of talking from the part of acting, which caused unnatural progress in the conversations.

The students' performances improved after the students had a chance to revise the phrases. One revision aimed to practice introducing and giving personal information as well as asking about preferences. The other revision aimed to practice situations in the shop. After the revision the students were able to plan dialogues that included only asking about each other or only about the other members of their families. The dialogues, when the students role-played the shopping scene, improved most significantly because the students accompanied their actions with phrases. Therefore, the performances developed meaningfully and quite smoothly. The dialogues became shorter but better structured and meaningfully developing. The differences in the dialogues before and after the revision are proved in the chart below, which contains the transcript of chosen students' performances.

The comments given by the students were carried out in the mother tongue. The students at this age were not able to provide such commentaries as the students in the ninth class. The aspects commented concerned the dramatisations or the funny moments of the performances. When the students were asked to draw faces into the exercise book in order to evaluate the activity of role-playing, all the drawings showed that the students really liked the activity and would like the role-plays to be included in the English lessons again in the future.

## **Conclusion**

The revision, in which students learned phrases of the needed language functions, helped to improve students' performances more significantly than in the ninth class. Besides the revision, setting rules and the criteria for the dialogue creation had the biggest impact on the improvements of the meaningfulness and fluency of the students' oral performance.

The reason for the more significant improvement from the point of meaningfulness is the fact that the students in the fifth class were lacking some phrases in their previous performances and they did not try to express them at all, which caused discontinuousness and major inconveniences in meaningfulness of the performed conversations. The students' focus before the revision was not on the meaning of the dialogues but on the creation of as many exchanges as possible. Due to the fact that the amount of new phrases was limited in order not to overload the students, it is not possible to state what kind of phrases students preferentially use and what the reason for their choices is.

Before group A	After group A
<p>Good morning.          Good morning.          What is your name?          My name is ---. What is your name?          My name is ---.          I need some apples.          Yes, apples next to orange.          (point and exchange goods )          Thank you.          It is 30 'koruns'.          (exchange money)          Thank you.          Bye.          Bye.</p>	<p>Good morning.          Good morning. Can I help you?          I need some bananas.          How many bananas?          Five, please.          Here you are.          Thank you. (exchange)          It is 15 crowns.          Here you are. (exchange)          Thank you.          Bye.          Bye.</p>
<p><u>Correction:</u>          How can I help you?          Apples <u>are</u> next to the oranges.          Here you are.          Crowns</p>	<p><u>Correction:</u>  <u>How</u> can I help you?          How many bananas <u>do you want</u>?</p>

### 5.3. Evaluation of the project

Several different means of evaluation of the project were used. The results of each individual final analysis are formulated.

#### 5.3.1. Reflections

The first mean of the evaluation of the project were the reflexions of each individual lesson and comments of the tutor. The aim was to get immediate feedback on the lesson in

order to make the other lessons better and more effective next time and to judge whether the activities were effective. From all the reflexions it can be stated that learning to language functions is beneficial and that active use of the functions in communication has a crucial effect on the improvement of meaningfulness and adequacy of speech. Also the lessons showed students really liked the social communication activities in which they are allowed to speak freely.

### **5.3.2. Observation**

The second method was the observation of the development of the use of language functions in the students' oral performances. The aim was to collect information about whether students started to use actively some of the phrases taught, whether and how the students' performance in communicative activities improved.

The students improved most significantly in expressing those language functions that caused the biggest problems at the beginning. During the activities they acquired the knowledge of the forms of the suitable phrases and fixed them correctly in their memory. On the contrary, the stagnation or only minimal improvement was noticed in expressing the language functions whose phrases at the beginning contained only minor problems when used by the students in the performed communication. The reason probably is that the correct phrase is so similar to the wrongly created phrase that it is very difficult for the students to avoid making mistakes since the phrase is strongly fixed.

The use of the new phrases and expressions enabled the students to perform more naturally and fluently. The hesitation in the speech was reduced by a third or in some cases even by a half of its amount of appearance compared to the first observation. The use of new phrases enabled the students to create more logic connections of individual steps of their conversation. Therefore, the conversation or the speech has developed more naturally. However, there are still several situations in which students are struggling to express themselves clearly and adequately, especially in situations in which the students cannot occur yet in their real-life. The reasons may be that the students are not able to personalize themselves with the given role or they may not be sure how the situation would realistically develop even in their own mother tongue. The situation could be solved next time by presenting a similar situation in the classroom. The situation can be either presented in the

form of a text for reading or a situation to be discussed collectively before asking to be performed as a role-played dialogue.

The chart of expressed language functions and noted improvements in the students' speaking performance is placed in the appendix 2.

### **5.3.3. Evaluation of tests**

The third mean of evaluating the project was the analysis of the results of the tests focusing on the language functions. The aim was to gain information about all the phrases that the students were taught, even those that they did not use actively. The conclusion will state whether or not the context helps the students to clarify the meaning of phrases of various language functions..

The first test that the students took was a translation of everyday phrases and expressions from the students' textbook. The test was designed in the cooperation with the teacher and according to the compromised requirements of both of us. Therefore, not all the phrases used contained focused language functions and they were not tested due to the mere translation in the precisely suitable way. For the purposes of this research I used only those phrases that suited the requirements of the project. The result of the test was the division of the phrases into groups according to the cause of the mistakes, whether it was insufficient knowledge of grammar, vocabulary or meaning. Both tests are placed in the appendix 7.

On the basis of the gained results a new test was designed, it suited more the purposes of the project. In the second test the students were asked to fill the provided phrases into mini dialogues according to their meanings and given contexts to prove whether the students know in which situations the phrases can be used. Crucial for the choice of the phrases were the incorrect translation caused by the lack of incomprehension of the meaning or the translation that was not filled at all.

The test proved that although the students were not able to translate the phrases correctly in the first test, all or nearly all the students were able to use them correctly in the given context. This applies to seven out of eleven most problematic phrases, which is quite high number. Therefore, it is very important to teach students the language in the context and through communicative activities that require students to express themselves meaningfully. In these activities students will be enabled to learn how to use the needed phrases and will be able to use them in real life.

#### **5.3.4. Questionnaire**

The last mean of evaluation of the project was a questionnaire given to the students at the end of my teaching practice. The aim was to gain the students' evaluation of their performances in activities they undertook during my teaching practice and of the phrases they learned.

The questionnaire revealed that the students consider the language function practice that was carried out in the lessons as beneficial and that the phrases helped them in role-play preparations although not most significantly. The proof of the benefits is shown in the students' self-evaluation, in which their marking raised in average by a level higher than it was in the first questionnaire given to the students before the project started.

The students are considering the dialogue practice useful for themselves when travelling abroad and when using the language in real life conversations and also when improving their speaking skills in general. The questionnaire also revealed that most of the students would like to integrate more speaking activities in the English lessons. The questionnaire is provided in the appendix 3.

The students' reactions supported the already made conclusions that activities focused on purposeful interactive communication and the use of language functions help students to improve their ability to create meaningful and socially adequate communication that could be used in real life outside the classroom.

## **6. Conclusion**

The thesis and the criteria of the activities design which were derived from the study of theory and methodology presumed that activities that include the practice of various language functions and are based on the interactive and communicative principles can make the learning process of speaking and especially of communication more effective and will lead to improvements of fluency, social adequacy and meaningfulness of the students' speech. The effectiveness of those principles and set criteria was examined in the practical project in which a proof or a denial of the thesis was expected.

### **Interaction and purpose**

During the project I observed that the students were willing to talk when they had a purpose to talk. When students have a purpose to talk, they actively react and respond to the other students' speech. As a result, the interaction between or among students becomes more effective and more natural. Therefore, the basic components when creating effective communicative activity are information gaps, problems to be solved and real life situations. The main purposes to talk in the activities used during the project were acting real life situations through meaningful dialogues and exchanging information in order to manage the given task. Those communicative life elements brought to the classroom were the most motivating aspects for the students. However, the purpose itself does not enable the success of the activity as proved in the observation carried out before the project started. Students need to be provided with the tools that help them express themselves meaningfully and adequately.

### **Functions and phrases**

It has been noticed in one of the lessons that when the students were motivated to talk because they had a purpose to talk, the students were trying to use any language available in order to get the intended meaning across. Therefore, it is not necessary to provide students with all the possible phrases for the speaking activity because students are able to cope with the situations for which they do not have all the needed language. It is important to realise that this ability is a very important part of communicative competence and is necessary for the typical situations in which students will occur when using the language in real life outside the classroom.

During this mentioned lesson, the effect of the students' ability to cope with the situation for which they lacked the needed language knowledge was observed. The success



increased the students' self-confidence and motivated the students to participate and interact even more with the other students.

However, when aiming to improve students' speech students need to be provided with needed phrases of various language functions. To teach students the phrases of different language functions helps to show them the correct way of communication. Moreover, the students' communication improves when they learn to use new phrases actively. Therefore, to be able to talk meaningfully and adequately, students need to be provided with tools, which means they need to be taught various language functions and to have a chance to practice their use regularly. When the condition of regular practice is fulfilled then the students' speech can improve also from the point of view of fluency. Due to the rather short-time research, the improvement of fluency could not be significant during the project or in case of one individual activity was not noticed at all.

### **Limitations**

Even if the project proved that the assumptions stated in the thesis appeared in its basis veridical, the research was affected by its limited time duration and the limited amount of the students that were involved in the project as the objects of the research. The results could become even more credible if it had been possible to deepen the research and involve more students into the project. Due to the fact that the research brought a lot of various thoughts and findings connected with the use of language functions and criteria for the appropriate choice of suitable activities, a further investigation would really be beneficial for the clarification and the credible proof of the long-term results.

### **Final note**

The result of the project was beneficial even for me personally. It proved to me that not only I but also other students profit from the exposure of the phrases of the everyday life. The only differences between me and the students was the environment. I benefited largely from the real environment and the conversations with native English speakers when I travelled and stayed abroad. For the students the environment were only the simulated real life situations, which were limited by their duration restricted to the English lessons and the fact that the students did not have a chance to meet in those situations native English speakers but only the classmates whose English contains the natural mistakes caused by the gradual improvement and development of the language skills. Nevertheless, the revisions and the free

speaking activities were beneficial for the students' development of their communicative skills and confidence of speaking.

Even if the whole project only simulated real-life situations, the students could at least experience how everyday situations would be carried out in the English language and learn how to express themselves in those situations. The students could also realise that for some situations only certain language can be used and that the choice of the language depends on the social climate of the situation. Another benefit of the free speaking activities for the students is that they can gain more from learning when they interact in the task, in other words, when they communicate. All the benefits of the communication practice and the improvement of communicative skills are useful for their future lives whatever language they will speak.

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#### Collections of textbooks

Chit Chat 1,2 (Shipton, 2003)

Project 1,2,3 (Hutchinson, 2000)

## 8. Appendices

### 8.1. Appendix 1: Analysis of the textbooks

The chart bellow contains phrases and expressions of various language functions that occurred in the textbook “Project 3” (Hutchinson, 2000).

Lesson	Phrases and expressions	
	listed	mentioned in text
Introduction	Hi. Welcome!	Come what may.
1	She's new here. He's in love Come in. It's a pity... Pardon? Sorry. Pay attention!	Oh. Wow! Well! Okay. It is (great, fantastic, terrible...).
2	This is “name”. Do you want to come to...? Do you fancy...? No, thanks. in a minute I'd love to. Here's “name”. after all	“name”, meet “name” Ah! Err. Good heavens. Congratulations. What? You can't do that! Don't worry!
3	You are kidding! What's the problem? He can't make it. It won't be much of a party I'll do it. It'll be fun. Are you having fun? There she is. Here goes. Would you like...? Do you want...? Yes, please, I'll ... Yes, I would love to. Yes, OK. No, thank you. Don't worry. It's all right. OK. I'm sorry. Could I speak to...? Phone again later. I think (that) ... I don't think (that) ...	I'm sure. Oh no. I don't believe it! I'll show you. Aaarg!

	Perhaps ... "Name" thinks/hopes that ... will ...	
4	Come round to my place. Here it is. a sort of The best thing is... She fancies... He's going out with... Have you got a thing about...? What do you mean? You must be joking. Really? No, why? Here it is. Sure. What do you mean? You know ... That sounds ... (adj.) He looks ...(adj.) Are you doing anything at the moment?	You know what I mean. See you. Shell we "do sth."?
5	"Title of a film" is on this week. There she is. Guess what! He asked me out. How's it going? Get lost! Um ... Fine, thanks. Shell we ... ? What about ...? Is there a "" near her? How do I get to "place name"? Turn left/right at the traffic lights. Go along that road. Go round the roundabout. Go over a bridge over the canal. Go past "shop name". Take the 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> turning on the left. It is on the corner. It is on the left/right.	Hey look! I know! That is no good for "sb.". How is it going? Excuse, me. Thanks a lot.
6	Count me out. I've changed my mind. If you want to. What's the matter with him? I'm not really interested. If you want to. That's true. I don't think I'll bother. I just don't feel like it.	Come on! I don't believe it/ Heh. Stop! Wait! Never mind. I am sorry. Don't stop. Never give up.

	You lot.	
7	She should be back ... I must go. Oh, nothing. I haven't done anything to him. Why don't you give him a ring? You must ... You mustn't ... You don't have to ...	Come on. What's up? I'll see.
8	Well, just go and grab the table. I see, now. Come on, you two. That table over there is free. Where on earth are we going? Let's ... Shall we ...? You should/shouldn't ... I don't feel well. Its time to go. What's wrong?	Cool! I'll go and ... Just a minute. Good idea.

## 8.2. Appendix 2: Observation chart

The chart bellow contains data about language functions and their developments that were observed during the project in the individual classes.

Key:

- ++ expressed without any problems
- + expressed in simple forms
- expressed with difficulties, is understandable
- \* expressed with difficulties, is not adequate or meaningful
- did not occurred (can not express yet or is not used by students)
  
- o activities of the project did not focused on
- ↑ improved
- ↓ worsen
- ↔ remained the same

Language function	3 <sup>rd</sup> class	5 <sup>th</sup> class		9 <sup>th</sup> class	
		before	after	before	after
greeting	++	++	o	++	o
thanking	++	++	o	++	o
apologising	++	++	o	++	o
introducing	+	+	↔	++	o
giving personal info.	•	+	↑ •	++	o
asking about preferences (hobbies, abilities)	-	+	↑	++	o
describing	+	+	o	+	o
giving direction	-	•	o	+	↑ •
complaining	-	•	↔	+	↔
agreeing, disagreeing	-	+	↔	+	↔
requesting	-	•	↑	+	↑ •
narrating	-	-	o	+	↑ •
refusing	-	-	↑	•	↔
giving a permission, forbidding	-	•	↑ •	•	↑ •
offering	-	-	↑	•	↑
giving a reason	-	-	o	*	↑
suggesting	-	-	o	*	↑
reminding	-	-	o	-	o



### 8.3. Appendix 3: Questionnaires




Questionnaire 1 that was given to students before the project started

**D O T A Z N Í K**

1) Zakřížkuj předměty, které máš rád(a). (můžeš zakřížkovat i více předmětů najednou)

<input type="checkbox"/> český jazyk	<input type="checkbox"/> dějepis	<input type="checkbox"/> fyzika
<input type="checkbox"/> matematika	<input type="checkbox"/> zeměpis	<input type="checkbox"/> chemie
<input type="checkbox"/> anglický jazyk	<input type="checkbox"/> přírodověda	<input type="checkbox"/> informatika

2) Zakřížkuj podle toho, jak se ti hodiny angličtiny líbí nebo nelíbí.

				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3) Napiš, co na hodinách angličtiny děláš rád(a) a co nerad(a).

rád(a): \_\_\_\_\_

nerad(a): \_\_\_\_\_




4) Očísluj podle toho, co ti při hodině angličtiny jde nebo nejde. (od jedničky do čtyřky)

(1 - nejlépe mi jde, 4 - nejde mi)

_____ čtení
_____ psaní
_____ mluvení
_____ poslech

5) Při hodině angličtiny jste dělali rozhovory ve dvojicích a trojicích.

Ohodnot' (zakřížkuj) své vystoupení:

				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6) Zakřížkuj podle pravdy:

Při rozhovoru:

☐ nemám žádné problémy.

☐ mám problémy.

Pokud máš problémy, zakřížkuj je. (můžeš zakřížkovat více odpovědí)

☐ neumím gramatika

☐ neznám slovíčka

☐ nevím, jak se zeptat a odpovědět

☐ spolužák se mnou nespolupracuje

☐ jiné: \_\_\_\_\_

7) Chceš-li ještě něco dodat k hodinám angličtiny, zde můžeš:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Děkuji za vyplnění dotazníku.      **THANK YOU**

## Filled-in questionnaire

### DOTAZNÍK

1) Zakřížkuj předměty, které máš rád(a). (můžeš zakřížkovat i více předmětů najednou)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> český jazyk    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> dějepis     | <input type="checkbox"/> fyzika                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> matematika     | <input type="checkbox"/> zeměpis                | <input type="checkbox"/> chemie                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> anglický jazyk | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> přírodověda | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> informatika |

2) Zakřížkuj podle toho, jak se ti hodiny angličtiny líbí nebo nelíbí.

😊		☒		😊			☹
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3) Napiš, co na hodinách angličtiny děláš rád(a) a co nerad(a).

rád(a): rozumné situace, scénky, rozhovory

nerad(a): celá hodina stát v lavicích, psaní písemek

4) Očísluj podle toho, co ti při hodině angličtiny jde nebo nejde. (od jedničky do čtyřky)

<u>2</u>	čtení
<u>4</u>	psaní
<u>1</u>	mluvení
<u>3</u>	poslech

5) Při hodině angličtiny jste dělali rozhovory ve dvojicích a trojicích.

Ohodnot' (zakřížkuj) své vystoupení:

😊		😊			☹
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6) Zakřížkuj podle pravdy:

Při rozhovoru:

- ☐ nemám žádné problémy.  
☒ mám problémy.

Pokud máš problémy, zakřížkuj je. (můžeš zakřížkovat více odpovědí)

- ☐ neumím gramatika  
☒ neznám slovíčka  
☐ nevím, jak se zeptat a odpovědět  
☐ spolužák se mnou nespolupracuje  
☐ jiné: \_\_\_\_\_

7) Chceš-li ještě něco dodat k hodinám angličtiny, zde můžeš:

---



---



---

Děkuji za vyplnění dotazníku.

THANK YOU

## Filled-in questionnaire

### DOTAZNÍK

1) Zakřížkuj předměty, které máš rád. (můžeš zakřížkovat i více předmětů najednou)

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> český jazyk               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> dějepis | <input type="checkbox"/> fyzika            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> matematika     | <input type="checkbox"/> zeměpis            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> chemie |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> anglický jazyk | <input type="checkbox"/> přírodověda        | <input type="checkbox"/> informatika       |

2) Zakřížkuj podle toho jak se ti hodiny angličtiny líbí nebo nelíbí.

					
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3) Napiš co na hodinách angličtiny děláš rád(a) a co nerad(a).

rád(a): mluvím

nerad(a): píšu testy

4) Očísluj podle toho co ti při hodině angličtiny jde nebo nejde (od jednička do čtyřky).  
(1 - nejlépe mi jde, 4 - nejde mi)

- |          |         |
|----------|---------|
| <u>1</u> | čtení   |
| <u>2</u> | psaní   |
| <u>3</u> | mluvení |
| <u>4</u> | poslech |

5) Při hodině angličtiny jste dělali rozhovory ve dvojicích a trojicích.  
Ohodnot' své vystoupení:

					
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6) Zakřížkuj podle pravdy:

Při rozhovoru:

- ☐ nemám žádné problémy.  
☒ mám problémy.

Pokud máš problémy, zakřížkuj je. (můžeš zakřížkovat více odpovědí)

- ☐ neumím gramatika  
☒ neznám slovíčka  
☒ nevím, jak se zeptat a odpovědět  
☐ spolužák se mnou nespolupracuje  
☐ jiné: \_\_\_\_\_

7) Chceš-li ještě něco dodat k hodinám angličtiny, zde můžeš:

učení gramatiky ve větách

Děkuji za vyplnění dotazníku.

THANK YOU

## Questionnaire 2 that was given to students after the project finished

### DOTAZNÍK

V poslední době jste si opakovali fráze pro rozhovory v různých životních situacích.

- 1) Pomohli ti tyto fráze při tvoření rozhovorů?

určitě ano

☐

spíše ano

☐

spíše ne

☐

určitě ne

☐

- 2) Napiš frázi, kterou ses naučil(a) a kterou již umíš použít:

---

- 3) Ohodnoť své vystoupení při rozhovorech:

☐☐☐☐☐☐

- 4) Napiš, k čemu se **tobě** cvičení rozhovorů může hodit.

---

---

- 5) Chtěl(a) bys více mluvních aktivit v hodinách angličtiny? (zakřížkuj odpověď)

určitě ano

☐

spíše ano

☐

spíše ne

☐

určitě ne

☐

Děkuji za vyplnění dotazníku.

THANK YOU

## Filled-in questionnaire

### DOTAZNÍK

V poslední době jste si opakovali fráze pro rozhovory v různých životních situacích.

1) Pomohli ti tyto fráze při tvoření rozhovorů?

určitě ano

☐

spíše ano

☒

spíše ne

☐

určitě ne

☐

2) Napiš frázi, kterou ses naučil(a) a kterou již umíš použít:

Yes, of course.

3) Ohodnot' své vystoupení při rozhovorech:

☐☒☐☐☐☐

4) Napiš, k čemu se **tobě** cvičení rozhovorů může hodit.

Když pojedu do nějaké anglicky mluvící země.

5) Chtěl(a) bys více mluvních aktivit v hodinách angličtiny? (zakřížkuj odpověď)

určitě ano

☐

spíše ano

☒

spíše ne

☐

určitě ne

☐

Děkuji za vyplnění dotazníku.

THANK YOU

## Filled-in questionnaire

### DOTAZNÍK

V poslední době jste si opakovali fráze pro rozhovory v různých životních situacích.

1) Pomohli ti tyto fráze při tvoření rozhovorů?

určitě ano

☐

spíše ano

☒

spíše ne

☐

určitě ne

☐

2) Napiš frázi, kterou ses naučil(a) a kterou již umíš použít:

*Don't worry be happy*

3) Ohodnot' své vystoupení při rozhovorech:

☐☐☒☐☐☐

4) Napiš, k čemu se **tobě** cvičení rozhovorů může hodit.

*k mluvení předem v sešitě*

5) Chtěl(a) bys více mluvních aktivit v hodinách angličtiny? (zakřížkuj odpověď)

určitě ano

☒

spíše ano

☐

spíše ne

☐

určitě ne

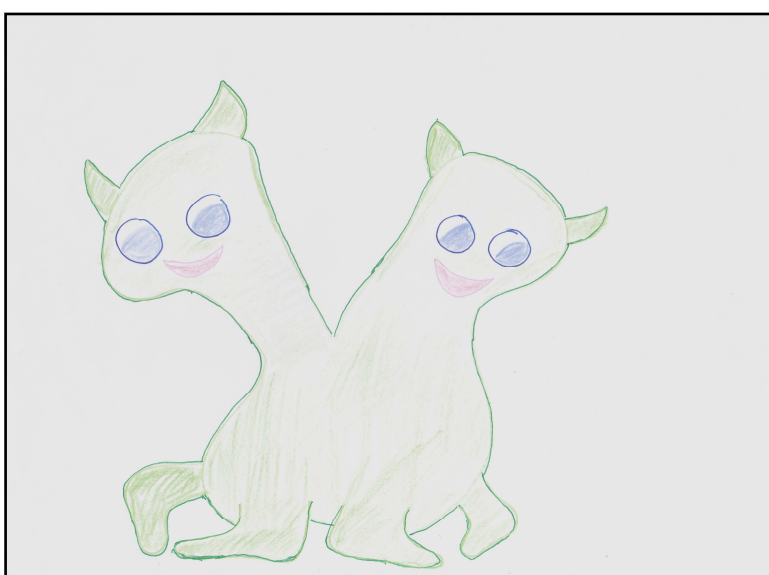
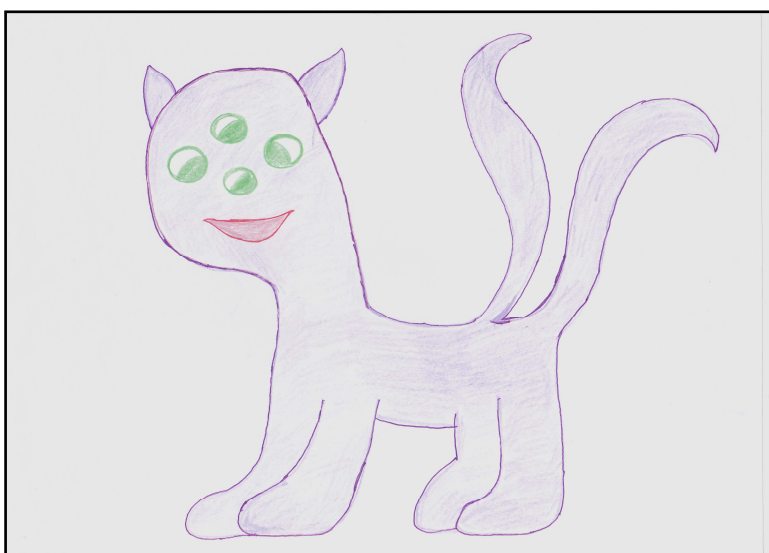
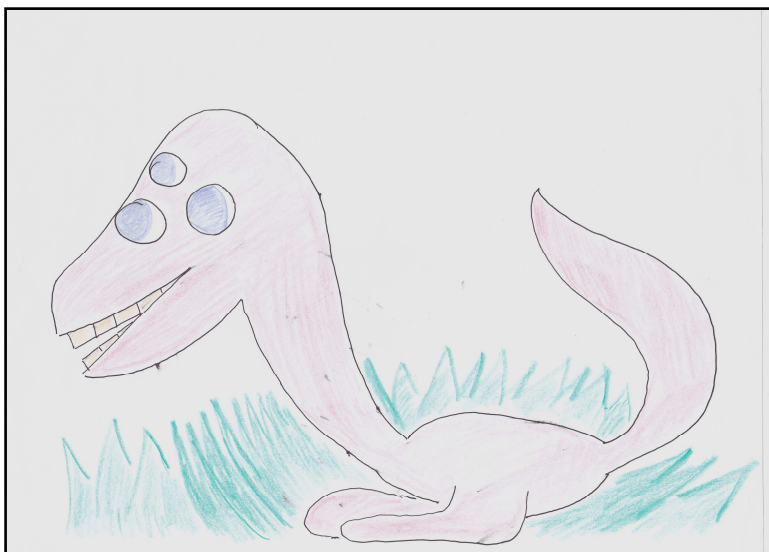
☐

Děkuji za vyplnění dotazníku.

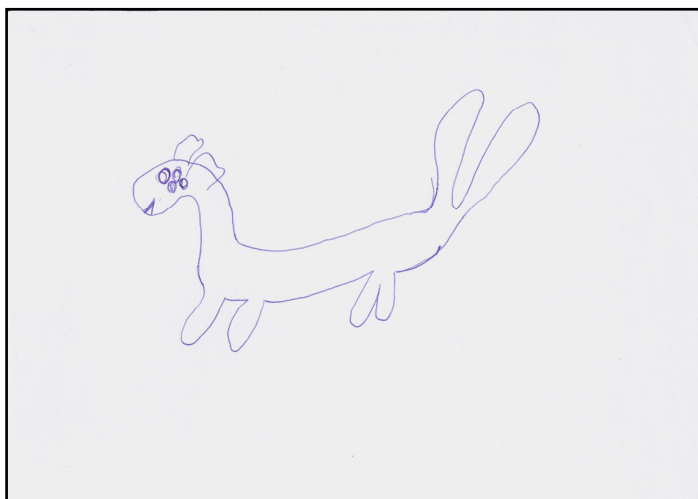
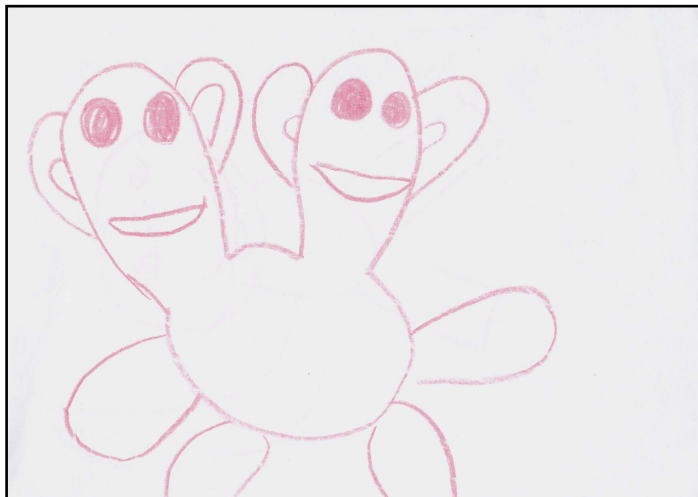
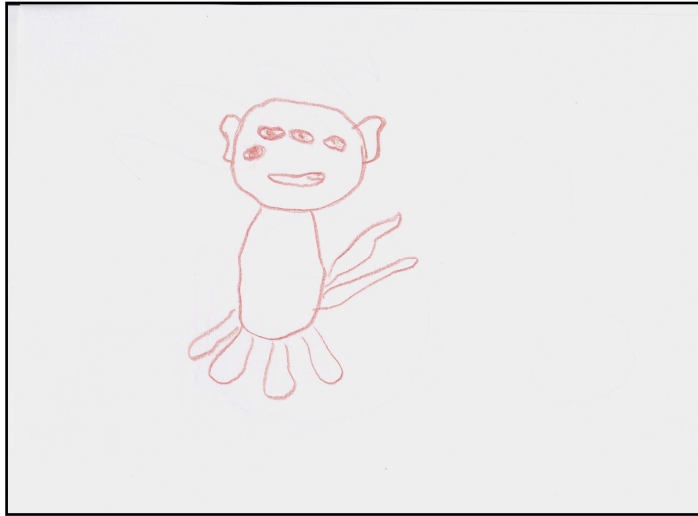
THANK YOU

#### 8.4. Appendix 4: Materials to Plan 1

Pictures of monsters used to be described (originally format A4)



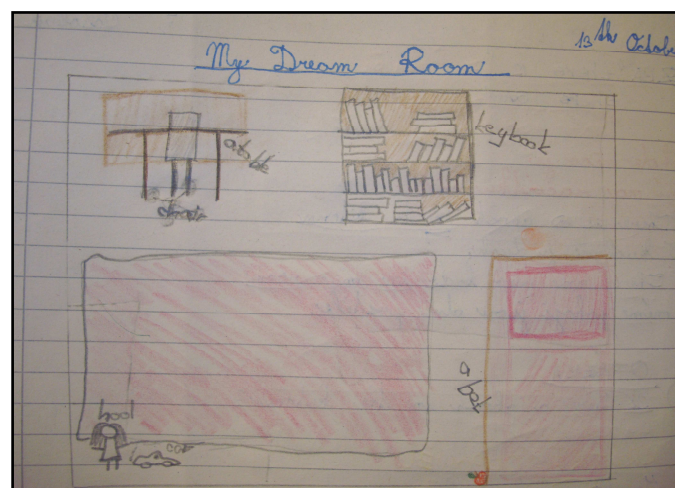
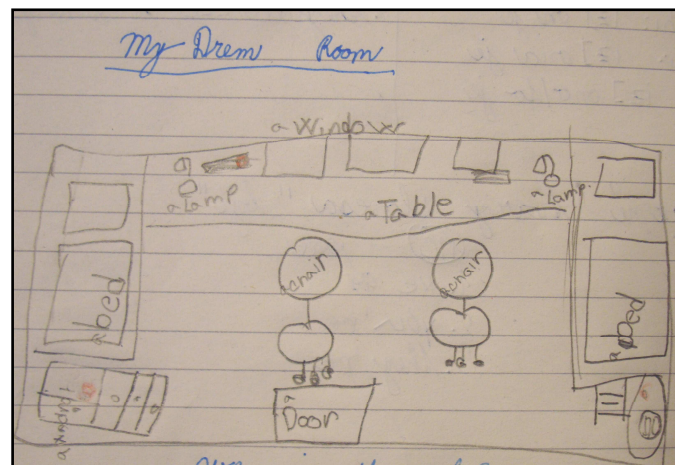
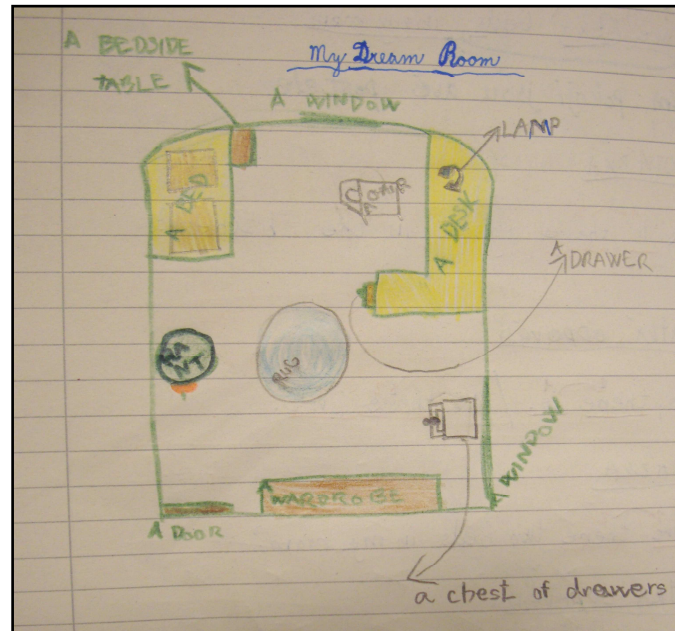
Pictures of monsters drawn by the students (chosen examples)





## 8.5. Appendix 5: Materials to Plan 2

Pictures of dream rooms drawn by the students (chosen examples)



## **8.6. Appendix 6: Materials to Plan 3**

List of topics

A travel guide

Apologize for coming late

Applying for a new job

At a restaurant (I don't have money.)

At the cinema (changed film)

At the doctor's (old people in the waiting room)

At the playground (children and mum)

Can I go to the party?

I have completely lost my way

In a hospital (health problem)

In a hotel (booking, meeting new friends, changing rooms)

In a shop (a claim)

In a shop (buy)

Looking for a new partner (acquaintance agency)

Miss the buss

My first day at school

We are moving a room (Can you help me?)

Young manager is trying to order (a concert of a very famous star)

Prepared sheet with a chart and phrases

Fill the phrases in the chart.

You can use one phrase more than once.

Topic	Phrases
In a hotel	
At a restaurant	
At the playground (parent and kid)	
In a shop	
At the doctor's	
I am lost	

Next, please.

One more, please.

Come here!

Excuse me.

Here you are.

How much is it?

What's the matter?

Can I have a bill, please?

Do you have a reservation?

I will take four, please.

You can't do that!

How can I help you?

Do you have change?

I have a look at it.

Where is the nearest hotel?

I would like to change the rooms.

## Appendix 7: Tests

### Test 1

Filled-in test, page 1

**REVISION 9th form**  
**project 3 – voc., phrases U1-6**

2/2

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 11 September

**PHRASES**

Jak se vede?	How's it going?
Měj se dobře!	Have a good time!
Nedělej si starosti	Don't worry!
Nepovídej! To si tedy vymýšlíš! (Kecáš.)	You're kidding!
<del>Nestíhám</del> Jsem na telefonu!	I'm busy. Answer the phone, please.
Nemůže to udělat!	He can't make it.
Vypadni!	Get lost!
Co to znamená?	What does it mean?
Libí se Ti můj nový účes?	Do you enjoy my new haircut?
Nevadí!	Never mind.
To zní skvěle!	It sounds great!
Kolik je hodin?	What's the time?

Filled-in test, page 2

Chodíš s Marií?	Are you going out with Maria?
Je mnou naprosto křivý!	Count me out!
Zastav se u mě zítra doma.	Come to my house tomorrow.
Omlouvám se, že jsem pozdě!	I'm sorry, I'm late.
Narodil jsem se roku 1994 v Liberci.	I was born in Liberec in 1994.
Co ti o tom myslíš? Máš nějakou představu?	Have you a thing about it?
Nemluv hlouposti.	Don't be silly!
To mi (vypadá) nudně!	That sounds boring.
Promiňte, jak se dostanu k radnici?	Excuse me. How do I get to the Town Hall?
Kolik máš kapesné? Máš nějakou představu?	How much pocket money have you had?
Co dávají dnes v kině?	What is on in the cinema today?
Kdy se to stalo?	When did it happen?
Hádej co?	Guess what!
Domyslel jsem si to.	I've changed my mind.
Pozval mě na rande.	He asked me out.



**REVISION 9th form**  
**project 3 – voc., phrases U1-6**

3/4

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 11. 9. \_\_\_\_\_

**PHRASES**

Jak se vede?	How are you?	/
<i>Mám se dobře!</i>	Have a good time!	/
<i>neboj se</i>	Don't worry!	/
Nepovídej! To si tedy vymýšlíš! (Kecáš.)	Are you kidding?	/
<i>jsem naprosto zaneprázdňen nemám čas telefonovat</i>	I'm busy. Answer the phone, please.	/
<i>není to možná</i>	He can't make it.	/
Vypadni!	Go away	/
<i>co tím myslíš / Co to znamená!</i>	What does it mean?	/
Líbí se Ti můj nový účes?	Do you like my new hairstyle?	/
<i>Neboj! Nevadí!</i>	Never mind.	/
To zní skvěle!	That's sound great	/
<i>kolik je</i>	What's the time?	/

Filled-in test, page 2

Chodíš s Marií?	Do you go <sup>out</sup> with Maria?	✓
veš mě ke mně napočkej	Count me out!	✓
Zastav se u mě zítra doma.	Come around to my house tomorrow.	✓
promiň jsem pozdě	I'm sorry, I'm late.	✓
Narodil jsem se roku 1994 v Liberci.	I <sup>was</sup> born in Liberec in 1994	✓
myslíš na to Co si o tom myslíš?	Have you a thing about it?	✓
Nemluv hlouposti.	don't speak mistakes Don't be silly.	✓
to zní nudně	That sounds boring.	✓
Promiňte, jak se dostanu k radnici?	excuse me. <del>How</del> <sup>How</sup> can I go to <del>the</del> town hall?	✓
kolik peněz máš u sebe, jako expres	How much pocket money have you had?	✓
Co dávají dnes v kině?	What on <sup>the cinema</sup> is <del>in</del> today	✓
kdy se stalo	When did it happen?	✓
Hádej co?	Guess what.	✓
změnil jsem názor	I've changed my mind.	✓
Pozval mě na rande.	He <sup>asked</sup> <del>invited</del> me <sup>out</sup> <del>to</del> <del>go</del> <del>to</del> <del>the</del> <del>party</del>	✓

## Test 2

Fill in a phrase:

Have a good time!	Don't worry!
He can't make it.	Get lost!
Never mind.	Count me out!
Don't be silly!	That sounds boring.
Have you a thing about it?	I've changed my mind.
How much pocket money have you had?	

- a) I am sorry. I didn't buy any fruit.  
b) \_\_\_\_\_. I will buy it today.
- a) We have a party on Sunday. Will you come?  
b) \_\_\_\_\_. I don't like parties.
- a) I think I will not win. Oh, I want to win.  
b) \_\_\_\_\_. You will win. You are the best runner.
- a) I am going on holiday. We are leaving tomorrow.  
b) Where are you going?  
a) To France.  
b) \_\_\_\_\_ there.
- a) Look. He is climbing up the roof.  
b) He is not strong. I think \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) At work Tom is making phone calls all days.  
b) \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) I am a monster. I will eat you up.  
b) \_\_\_\_\_. Behave like a teenager not like a child.
- a) What are you doing here?  
b) Why?  
a) It is my room. \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) Do you want an ice-cream?  
b) No, thank you.  
a) It is the strawberry ice-cream.  
b) OK. \_\_\_\_\_ Give me a little, please.
- a) Look this is my new picture.  
b) Hahaha.  
a) \_\_\_\_\_.  
b) Yeah. It is really funny.
- a) I have bought bread and ham for a dinner. I have 45 Kc left.  
b) \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Over 100 Kc.



## Filled-in test

Fill in a phrase:

Have a good time!	Don't worry!
<del>He can't make it.</del>	<del>Get lost!</del>
Never mind.	Count me out!
Don't be silly!	That sounds boring.
<del>Have you a thing about it?</del>	<del>I've changed my mind.</del>
How much pocket money have you had?	

- a) I am sorry. I didn't buy any fruit.  
b) Don't worry. I will buy it today.
- a) We have a party on Sunday. Will you come?  
b) Count me out. I don't like parties.
- a) I think I will not win. Oh, I want to win.  
b) Don't be silly. You will win. You are the best runner.
- a) I am going on holiday. We are leaving tomorrow.  
b) Where are you going?  
a) To France.  
b) That sounds boring there.
- a) Look. He is climbing up the roof.  
b) He is not strong. I think he can't make it.
- a) At work Tom is making phone calls all days.  
b) ~~He can't make it.~~  
Have you a thing about it
- a) I am a monster. I will eat you up.  
b) I've changed my mind. Behave like a teenager not like a child.
- a) What are you doing here?  
b) Why?  
a) It is my room. Get lost.
- a) Do you want an ice-cream?  
b) No, thank you.  
a) It is the strawberry ice-cream.  
b) OK. Never mind. Give me a little, please.
- a) Look this is my new picture.  
b) Hahaha.  
a) Have a good time.  
b) Yeah. It is really funny.
- a) I have bought bread and ham for a dinner. I have 45 Kc left.  
b) How much pocket money have you had?

## Filled-in test

Fill in a phrase:

Have a good time! ☺	Don't worry! ☺
He can't make it. ☺	Get lost! ☺
Never mind. ☺	Count me out! ☺
Don't be silly! ☺	That sounds boring. ☺
Have you a thing about it? ☺	I've changed my mind. ☺
How much pocket money have you had? ☺	

- a) I am sorry. I didn't buy any fruit.  
b) Never mind. I will buy it today.
- a) We have a party on Sunday. Will you come?  
b) Count me out!. I don't like parties.
- a) I think I will not win. Oh, I want to win.  
b) Don't be silly!. You will win. You are the best runner.
- a) I am going on holiday. We are leaving tomorrow.  
b) Where are you going?  
a) To France.  
b) Have a good time! there.
- a) Look. He is climbing up the roof.  
b) He is not strong. I think He can't make it.
- a) At work Tom is making phone calls all days.  
b) That sounds boring.
- a) I am a monster. I will eat you up.  
b) Don't worry!. Behave like a teenager not like a child.
- a) What are you doing here?  
b) Why?  
a) It is my room. Get lost!
- a) Do you want an ice-cream?  
b) No, thank you.  
a) It is the strawberry ice-cream.  
b) OK. I've changed my mind. Give me a little, please.
- a) Look this is my new picture.  
b) Hahaha.  
a) Have you a thing about it?  
b) Yeah. It is really funny.
- a) I have bought bread and ham for a dinner. I have 45 Kc left.  
b) How much pocket money have you had?